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# Shamanistic practices among the Akit of Eastern Sumatra

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Master Thesis

# SHAMANISTIC PRACTICES AMONG THE AKIT OF EASTERN SUMATRA

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## **Abstract**

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### **SHAMANISTIC PRACTICES AMONG THE AKIT OF EASTERN SUMATRA**

This is a study of the shamanistic practices and beliefs among the Akit people living in Rupat Island of eastern Sumatra, Indonesia, based upon field research for seventeen months in two Akit villages. Although the Malay shamanism and its variations in the Malay Peninsula have attracted the attention of many scholars for more than a hundred years, those of rainforest foragers or hunter-gatherers in Sumatra have scarcely been studied. The main purpose of this thesis is, therefore, to provide a detailed ethnographical description of the Akit shamanistic practices and beliefs and to demonstrate the contrasts and the resembles between shamanisms of the Akit, Malays, Orang Asli groups in the Malay Peninsula, and other ethnic groups all over the world.

This thesis consists of seven chapters. In Chapter 1, contemporary situation of the Akit, such as their geography, history, language, and economy, as well as historical setting is presented. Chapter 2 treats some prior studies on shamanism in the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra, and illustrates the definition of shamanism in reference to classical studies of Siberian and inner Asian shamanisms, showing the framework of comparative study. In Chapter 3, the Akit shamanism in social context is analyzed, and then villagers' attitudes toward shamanistic practices and the succession of shamanic power are described. Chapter 4 deals with the symbolic theme of the relationship between human, cosmos, and spirit, and then the structure of cosmos and the concepts of spirits, soul, and witchcraft in the Akit cosmology are explained. In Chapter 5, the procedures of two shamanic rituals, i.e. hearing ritual and purifying and offering ritual are analyzed. Chapter 6 is concerned with the paraphernalia and offerings of séance, in which the usages and meanings of spirit houses, spirit boats, and castles are examined in detail. Chapter 7 is the concluded one. The present and the future of the Akit shamanism are summarized, in relation with the topics discussed in the previous chapters. Throughout the ethnographical descriptions from Chapter 3 to 6, a comparative analysis of worldwide shamanism is ubiquitously made as well.

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## Orthography

The Akit orthography used in this thesis follows that developed in *Struktur Bahasa Akit* (Umar et al. 1991), which uses symbols chosen to conform to the modern orthography of Bahasa Indonesia.

The book distinguishes six vowels in the Akit language, viz. *a* [a], *e* [e], *e* (ə) [ə], *i* [i], *o* [o], and *u* [u]. There are five diphthongs, viz. *au* [aw], *ui* [uy], *ei* [ey], and *ai* [ay]. The consonants are eighteen kinds, viz. *b* [b], *c* [c], *d* [d], *g* [g], *h* [h], *j* [j], *k* [k], *kh* [kh], *l* [l], *m* [m], *n* [n], *ng* [ng], *ny* [ny], *p* [p], *s* [s], *t* [t], *w* [w], and *y* [y].

However, the names of villages or hamlets in this thesis are spelled, not based upon this Akit orthography, but upon Bahasa Indonesia, because the local government adopts the standard orthography of Bahasa Indonesia for naming them.

# **1. Introduction: the Akit in Rupert Island**

Southeast Asia has been regarded as one of the core areas of world shamanisms. Many studies have been done on the Malay shamanism or that of Orang Asli groups in the Malay Peninsula, and on that among the interior and highland Austronesian groups in Sumatra, Borneo, or Sulawesi. However, the studies on shamanism among the rainforest foragers living in Sumatra, i.e. the Akit, the Sakai, the Kubu, the Utan, or the Bonai are very scarce, although their shamanisms are still widely practiced as historically and culturally inherited social practice.

This is an anthropological study on the shamanism of the Akit living in Rupert Island of eastern Sumatra. The main purpose of this thesis is, first of all, to provide an ethnographical description of their shamanistic practices and beliefs that had not been studied in detail. After that, the way how their shamanism is practiced and maintained in their social and cosmological context is shown. In addition, the resemblances and contrasts between shamanisms of the Akit, Malays, and other ethnic groups all over the world are illustrated. This examination could eventuate in understanding the shamanisms of the Malay world as well as those of the all over the world. While there are numerous approaches to study shamanism, J. M. Atkinson positions the role of ethnographic works concerning shamanism as “newer ethnographic writings offer an important corrective by underscoring the connection of shamanistic practices to local, regional, national, and trans-national context (1992: 309).”

## **Present Situations**

Rupert Island lies to the east coast of Riau Province, Sumatra. Its south coast confronts the town of Dumai, a large port for exporting oil, in mainland Sumatra, separated with a narrow Rupert Strait. The north coast faces the Malacca Strait. The mainland of the Malay Peninsula could be seen from its north shore in the far distance (see Map 1). Because of this geographical closeness, Rupert Island has strong connection with Malaysia. In the island, therefore, the Malaysian ringgit is a currency in circulation as well as Indonesian

rupiah. In terms of traffic distance from the northern coast of Rupert Island, the way to the town of Malacca, Malaysia, is shorter than to the town of Dumai.

Rupert Island has a vast area of approximately 1,500 square kilometers. Although the island is generally recognized as one island, some narrow straits or channels divide the land into some parts. The environment of the island is characteristic of its low marshy. The coastal area is covered by mangrove bush and the inland by tropical rainforest. The altitude of the island is between zero to two meters above sea level. While it is said that there are a rainy season (August- December) and a dry season (January- July), a certain amount of rainfalls is observed throughout the year. It is a typical tropical climate. The total population of the island is approximately 40,000 people. All villages on the island have been built along coasts or along riverbanks. Its inlands are uninhabited area in general. While all villages are connected by paved or non-paved roads nowadays, water transportation is still an essential traffic method.

The total population of the Akit in Rupert Island is estimated at 4,000-5,000 people. These days, all the Akit settle in villages mainly in the coastal area of the Morong Channel (see Map 2), and engage in fishery, swidden cultivation of dry rice or tuber, and cash labor in oil palm plantations or charcoal huts owned principally by the Chinese. Traditional hunting and gathering are preceded by these activities. I carried out my field research from August 2006 to November 2007 exclusively in two Akit villages, i.e. the villages of Titi Akar and Hutan Panjang (see Map 2). While most Akit people in Rupert Island live in these two villages, some are in some other villages dispersedly. All of them still retain the social ties with each other. Usually they have affinities outside their hamlets, and obey their customary law. The cultural traits are almost same throughout the all Akit hamlets.

The village of Titi Akar is situated in the northwestern part of Rupert Island (see Map 2). The village territory covers approximately 300 square kilometers. According to the village census in 2003, the population of the village was 4,566, in which Muslim population was 809 people, Christian 656 people, and Buddhist or Hindu 3,101 people (Direktorat Jenderal Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Desa 2003). Almost all Muslims were Javanese who immigrated into Rupert Island after World War II. On the other hand, the remaining 3,757 people were the Akit, the Chinese and a just small number of the Batak. The total of the Akit population there who belongs to their own descent is estimated at about 1,800 people.

The village of Titi Akar consists of six hamlets, viz. the hamlets of Makdewa, Suka Ramai, Suka Damai, Hutan Samak, Sido Makmor, and Hutan Rayu. We could observe Akit people mainly at four hamlets, viz. the hamlets of Makdewa, Hutan Samak, Sido Makmor, and Hutan Rayu. A traditional headman (*batin suku akit hatas*) living in the hamlet of Makdewa supervises other three hamlets as well as his own hamlet. In each hamlet, there is one headman's assistant. In addition to the traditional headman, a bureaucratic village headman (*penghulu; kepala desa*) is also appointed by the local government these days. He also lives in the hamlet of Makdewa. As he used to be a traditional headman, he is an Akit as well. My field research was carried out in this village for twelve months (August 2006- July 2007).

The village of Hutan Panjang is situated in the center of Rupat Island along the Morong Channel. The village territory covers approximately 73 square kilometers. According to the village census in 2007, the total population was 2,782 people, in which Muslim population was 386 people, Christian 912 people, and Buddhist or Hindu 1,484 people (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Bengkalis 2007). All Muslim were Javanese who immigrated into Rupat Island after World War II. Almost all Christians and Buddhists or Hindus, 2,396 people, were Akit, and Chinese. The Akit population there is estimated at about 1,200 people.

The village of Hutan Panjang consists of six hamlets, viz. the hamlets of Pangkalan Baru, Sungai Bantal, Sungai Binjai, Hutan Panjang, Sungai Carok, and Hutan Pancur. We could observe Akit mainly at four hamlets of Pangkalan Baru, Sungai Bantal, Sungai Binjai, and Sungai Carok. A traditional headman lives in the hamlet of Pangkalan Baru, who supervises all the Akit living in this village. Here, however, the bureaucratic village headman is a Chinese. He lives in the hamlet of Hutan Panjang. My field research was carried out in this village for five months (August 2007- December 2007).

The Akit settle in hamlets coherently with the Chinese at present, and frequently intermarry with them. Although the Akit has bilateral or non-lineal descent system traditionally, they normally use the patrilineal descent system in the case of intermarriage with the Chinese. The villagers who have the Chinese descent are referred to as mixed-blooded Chinese (*pekhanakan*). While they follow the Chinese mores in the main on ceremonies, they cannot speak Chinese, and share lifestyles in common with the Akit rather than the Chinese. The population of these mixed-blooded Chinese is estimated at 5,000- 6,000 people in Rupat Island.

Although the Akit normally believe in Buddhism (approximately 60%) or



Christianity (40%) for the last three decades, these high-religious beliefs and customs have not influenced on their lifestyles or traditional beliefs. They have never believed in Islam. In relation with Islamic Malays, if an Akit intend to marry a Muslim, he or she has to be converted to Islam in every case. However, the Islamic symbolism and custom are occasionally found in their everyday lives, which perhaps originate from their intimate relationships with Islamic Malays.

The Akit use a dialect of the Malay language (*bahasa melayu*) in their daily life, i.e. *bahasa akit*, although most Akit could also speak Bahasa Indonesia or Malaysian. As for the general disposition of the Akit dialect, its pronunciations are a little different from the Malay language, while the vocabularies are almost same with the Malay language. When Akit villagers speak with Malaysian speakers in their dialect, according to them, they could communicate with the speakers with a little difficulty. On the other hand, however, it is hard to communicate with Bahasa Indonesia speakers. Throughout the research activity, I used Bahasa Indonesia or the standard Malay language mixed with the Akit dialect to communicate with Akit people.

The first-hand accounts about the ethnic group of Akit in the past are very scarce. M. Moszkowski did research upon the Akit living in the basin of the Siak River in eastern Sumatra at the beginning of the twentieth century, in addition to the Sakai (1908a; 1908a; 1909a; 1909b). According to him, there were two Akit villages, i.e. the village of Panasa in the basin of the Siak River and the village of Sëlët Molung in Bengkalis, in those days. Moszkowski visited in the village of Panasa, and said that the people there were emigrants from the village of Sëlët Molung (1909a:25; 1909b:709-710). The village of Sëlët Molung must be the village of Hutan Panjang because this village is occasionally referred to as Selat Morong (the Morong Channel) at present. According to informants, however, there is no intercourse between the villages of Panasa and Hutan Panjang anymore. The relationship is said to have been cut off more than a hundred years ago. Moreover, no aged informant of mine knows about the Akit in the basin of the Siak River, at all. Since Moszkowski was the German ethnologist, the main interest in his descriptions seems to be devoted for the physical anthropological analysis and morphological study of the material culture.

H. Kähler (1960), a German linguist, made comparative linguistic study between the dialects of the Akit, the Utan, and Orang Laut in eastern Sumatra. He conducted a short-term field research in Rupert Island before World War II, and observed Akit shamanic séance in the hamlet of Hutan Rayu (see Map 2).

As for the recent Indonesian resources, S. M. Umar (Umar et al. 1991)

compares the Akit dialect with Bahasa Indonesia in terms of linguistics, and S. E. Haris (1994), an Indonesian journalist, writes down a brief account on Akit culture.

## Historical Setting

Although the ethnic origin of the Akit is not clear, their admixture with Orang Asli (original people) groups, in particular, with the Negrito or the Jakun in the Malay Peninsula was pointed out in the earlier studies judging from their physical traits (Loeb 1935; Kennedy 1935; Moszkowski 1909a). The name “*akit* (raft)” is said to be derived from their past custom of building houses on the raft (see Photograph 1). As for the reason why this ethnic group is named “raft”, there are two opinions, both of which seem to contain some truth. At first, Moszkowski presumes the Akit has sea-nomads’ origin, and then they used to live only on rafts (1909a). Secondly, some Akit villagers insist that the name is something to do with the occupational groups in the Sultanate of Siak, not with sea-nomads. According to oral traditions about these groups, the Akit came to the domain of the Sultanate of Siak Seri Inderapura from somewhere, and then immigrated into Rupert Island some hundred years ago.

Some informants say that the ancestors of the Akit used to live in Malacca, Malaysia, before they came under the authority of the sultanate. The summary of their story is as follows:

The ancestors of the Akit were from Malacca. They were involved in the war between British and Dutch around Malacca, and their hamlets were burned down. They escaped onto the sea with bamboo raft on which a hut was built (*humah akit*). After drifting for three months, they reached the Siak River. They asked for help of the sultan, and went under his protection.

Contrariwise, however, some informants tell us completely different story that they are descendants of the ethnic group of the Minangkabau living in western Sumatra. The summary is as follows:

The Akit origin was the Islamic Minangkabau who lived around the town of Padang, western Sumatra. A part of the Minangkabau facing the Dutch colonial government ran away into the forest. They inhabited rainforest as

foragers for a long time, and lost their Islamic beliefs. Some of them have been living in the forest, which are the ethnic groups of the Sakai, the Talang Mamak, and the Bonai at present. Some of them went to the basin of the Siak River, and were sheltered by the sultan. They were the ancestor of the Akit.

The former historical view takes a point that the ancestor of the Akit came from the Malay Peninsula. The latter view, on the other hand, from mainland Sumatra. In my opinion, the former would be more probable than the latter judging from their cultural traits and pre-war records (see Moszkowski 1909b: 710-711). The opinion that the Akit ancestors came from among the Minangkabau seems to be beyond a possibility, although the cultural influences from Islamic Malays including the Minangkabau are observed among the present Akit.

After the ancestors of the Akit came under the protection of the sultanate, they were divided into three groups, and mainly two of the three groups then immigrated into the Rupert Island. The outline of this story is as follows:

In exchange for relief by the sultan, the Akit ancestors served him as woodcutters and transporters to build his palace in the village of Bukit Batu. To engage in this work, the people were divided into three occupation-functional groups:

- (1) The Utan (*suku Hutan*): a group who cuts down trees in rainforest.
- (2) The Akit (*suku Akit*): a group who carries woods with rafts on the Siak River.
- (3) The Hatas (*suku Hatas*): a group who works along roads or rivers for transportation.

Although the three groups were engaged in these occupations for a while, their hamlets were frequently frightened by wild animals. They petitioned the sultan to give them new places of residence (*tukar tempat*). The sultan gave Rupert Island and a part of Bengkalis Island to them. The first group, the Utan, mainly immigrated into Bengkalis Island. The others, the Akit and the Hatas, moved into Rupert Island. The name of Rupert Island is derived from “*tukar tempat*” (Kantor Wilayah Departmen Social Propinsi Riau 1979: 10-11).

This story does say neither names of sultan nor hearsay evidences of the periods when the historical events happened. On this process under the sultanate, in brief, the facts that the three ethnic groups, i.e. the Akit, the Hatas, and the Utan, had one common ancestral group and that the classification depended only on occupational distinction should be underlined. Whether it is the historical truth or not, all villagers in Rupert Island still believe this view, and it reflects the present reality of ethnic setting among the Akit.

The period of the immigration into Rupert Island is presumed to be, at latest, the beginning of the nineteenth century. Various situational evidences seem to confirm this statement. After two groups, i.e. the Akit and the Hatas, moved into Rupert Island, the Akit formed their hamlets mainly in the east part of the Morong Channel and along the east coast of Rupert Island around the hamlet of Sungai Raya. The Hatas settled in the west part of the island around the village of Titi Akar (see Map 2). As both groups continuously moved around from one place to other and frequently intermarried with each other, the nominal distinction between these two groups has almost been lost. Presumably, it happened partly because the descent system of both groups is bilateral. According to oral tradition, in addition, some families of the ethnic group of the Utan moved into Rupert Island from Bengkalis Island. They intermarried with the Akit, and they call themselves as the Akit these days.

About the history and the way of life of the Akit in Rupert Island before World War II, I succeeded in collecting material and reliable information from some aged men living in two villages, when I did my field work. They said that the number of the Akit and the Hatas who originally transmigrated into Rupert Island was estimated at not more than 100-200 people. The way of life was semi-nomadic: they lived in one place for two or three years, and then moved to another place. One hamlet consisted of several huts that were made of hard barks of a kind of palm (*nibon*) for the walls and the floors, leaves of hemp palm (*kopao*) for the roofs, and rattans for binding the barks and the leaves. Although cotton clothes were partly used even before World War II, they usually wore only kilts of gunny for covering the private part. Both men and women were long-haired. The hair was worn in a knot at the back of the head. The main method of transportation was small canoes made by hollowed out of large tree-trunk (*jalah lonas*). Although some of traditional houses and canoes are still used even these days, their dress style is the same as usual Malay dress. The Akit do not have long hair anymore (see Photograph 4). At the middle of the nineteenth century, perhaps, most Akit started to settle along the Morong Channel from the east. The proto-hamlets of present villages were built in this

period. The subsistence economy at that time was based on fishing with fish-traps and spears, on cultivating tubers and only a little amount of dry rice, on gathering sago palms and fruits, and on hunting wild animals. In the nineteenth century, the trade of rainforest products such as rattan was also started with traders from mainland Sumatra or from the Malay Peninsula.

After the immigration of the Akit into Rupert Island at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a little number of Chinese also immigrated into Rupert Island intermittently. They were charcoal makers or fishermen from southeast coastal area of China. They are married to the Akit women. As I said before, the descendants are called mixed-blooded Chinese or Chinese Akit nowadays. At the end of the nineteenth century, Chinese society was reported to exist in the village of Titi Akar. Around 1900, Islamic Malays (*orang Melayu*) also started to immigrate into the island from mainland Sumatra as well, but the intermarriage between the Akit and Malays was not happened. Hamlets of the both groups are distantly separated even now.

## 2. Akit Shamanism in Regional and Trans-Regional Context

### Parallelism and Divergence

From terminological and morphological points of view, the Akit shamanism seems to be similar to the magic of Islamic Malays in the Malay Peninsula, rather than shamanisms among Orang Asli groups in mountainous central region of the peninsula or among the interior and highland Austronesian groups from Sumatra to Borneo. The paraphernalia and procedures of the Akit shamanic séance have many identical points with those of Malay magic in the peninsula (Skeat 1900: 408-457; Annandale & Robinson 1903-1904; Winstedt 1951: 51-71; Laderman 1991). In terms of a part of cosmological world, also, the Akit shamanism shares with shamanism among coastal Malays. In their philosophy, for example, the concepts of the soul, referred to as *semangat*, and the binary divisions of the earth between land and sea, both of which are the essential order of the Malay cosmology (Endicott 1970: 47-119), could be observed. Because of their geographical proximity and historical relations with Malays, the Akit shamanism might have been influenced in part by the Islamic Malay magic. Even some decades ago, according to villagers, there were a few numbers of shamans from Islamic Malays, who had migrated from the peninsula, in the Malay village of Tanjung Medang of northern Rupert (see Map 2), and they had taught their shamanic techniques to Akit shamans. If the resemblances were emphasized, the Akit shamanism would be affiliated to a branch of the Malay magic.

Although the similarity is seen, the shamanism of the Akit who are not Muslim and had lived as rainforest foragers in the peripheral area of Indonesia has different traits with magic arts or shamanisms among Islamic Malays. Although the Malay shamanism and magic have often been marginalized or eliminated by the religious authority or transformed under the state control, the Akit shamanism has not. For instance, R. L. Winzeler argues some issues between state organizations, world religions (mainly Islam or Buddhism, or, recently Christianity), and shamanisms in southeast Asia: although shamanistic practices have prevailed broadly in southeast Asia, the shamanism

with the “classic” features found among Siberian and inner Asian people has been retained only among the “tribal” societies. These tribal societies are who until recently were at or beyond the margins of state control or of adherence to any of the world religions. On the other hand, the people with the world religions and the state organizations, such as Buddhist Burmese and Islamic Malays, lack such classic features of the shamanism. The reason is that both the world religions and the traditional rulers of southeast Asian states, who also claimed spiritual powers, could not accept the combination of the shamanism and the spiritual powers including the classic essences claimed by shamans (Winzeler 2004: 834-839). First and foremost, therefore, the Akit shamanism, which still holds such conceived essences, should be discussed in relationship with the classic shamanism. The essences of the Akit shamanism would have a relationship with that of Orang Asli groups (see Chapter 1). In their shamanisms, such classic essences could be seen frequently (see Chapter 4; Eliade 2004[1951]: 337-342).

In short, the Akit shamanism would be positioned in between the Malay magic and the Orang Asli shamanism. The traits of the Malay magic emerge in terminology, treatment methods, and paraphernalia of the Akit shamanism. On the other hand, the conceived essences of the Orang Asli shamanisms or, in other words, the classic essences of Siberian and inner Asian shamanisms, are observed mainly in the cosmology, methods of dedicating offerings, and a part of treatment of the Akit shamanism.

In the following, first of all, I shall introduce the prior studies on shamanisms and the magic arts in the Malay Peninsula and those among some foragers of Sumatra. Secondly, I shall examine the definition of “shaman” among the Akit in relation with that of other ethnic groups, through which the “classic essences of shamanism” are also explained.

## **2-1. Accounts of Shamanism in the Malay Peninsula and Western Indonesia**

### **Shamanism and Magic in the Malay Peninsula**

The Malay magic including shamanism and spirit mediumship has attracted the attention of western writers and researchers for more than a

hundred years.

The spirit-raising séance was mentioned in an account by W. E. Maxwell who was a colonial officer in British Malaya (1881: 12). He referred to all Malay treatments except for bone-setting and simple herbal remedies as “the black art”, and described a healing séance in the Sultanate of Perak in the Malay Peninsula (1883). W. W. Skeat (1900), an English philologist, collected considerable first-hand data of magical practices and beliefs including shamanic séances by Malay magicians in the peninsula. N. Annandale (1903a; 1903b; 1904a; 1904b) also gave thorough and clear data of beliefs and rites among Malay peasants and fishermen of Patani in southern Thailand. Then, J. D. Gimlette (1971 [1915]) wrote down various kinds of charms and medical treatments in the Sultanates of Pahang and Kelantan, and Zainal-Abidin (1922) described a shamanic séance in Negri Sembilan. Skeat and Annandale, in particular, recorded a massive amount of terms, procedures, and witnesses on magical practices that had many things in common with those of the Akit. The similarities shall be mentioned in following chapters, if necessary.

Mainly from historical point of view, R. O. Winstedt (1951) attempted to provide backgrounds and origins to the different component elements which make up the present-day magical culture of Malays. He tried to extract the elements of an indigenous religion practiced by Malays before their conversion, first to Hinduism from India and later to Islamic Sufism from the Middle East. J. Cuisinier's *Danses Magiques de Kelantan* (1936) treated dramatic and symbolic aspects of séances in the Sultanate of Kelantan, and analyzed the position of the magical practices of Malays in human macrocosm. J. M. Fraser (1960) gave a general observation of shamanistic healers (*bomoh*) among Malay fishermen in southern Thailand. R. Firth (1967) regarded the Kelantanese spirit-raising séance (*main peteri*) by spirit mediums as a social drama and entertainment rather than ritual, considering its social structure and medical effect. Endicott (1970) pointed out that the substance of Malay magic was the manipulation and the maintenance of structural boundaries between spirit and matter, examining above-mentioned descriptions by the earlier scholars.

Since the 1960's, social or cultural anthropologists have been more concerned with the social aspects of the Malay shamanism than the explanation of the symbolisms. Mohd. Taib Osman (1972) positioned the institution of traditional healers in its social context, and examined whether or not the patterns of supernatural premises underlying the notion of the work of traditional healer were consistent within themselves and consonant with general belief system of the culture in relationship with the Islamic beliefs and



modern medical techniques. C. S. Kessler (1977) discussed a type of séance (*main peteri*) as a response to social stresses and gender hostility in Kelantanese village life, which was based on I. M. Lewis's proposition (2003 [1971]) of sociological approach to spirit possession. She also made mention of symbolic meaning of a model castle (*balai*) that was observed in the Akit séance, too (Kessler 1977: 319-321). Winzeler (1993a) considered accurate definition of religious specialist, i.e. shaman, spirit medium, and priest, their personality or social role, and relationship between the religious roles and social order among ethnic groups living in Borneo.

The medical aspects of shamanic healing have also been illuminated in the field of general medical services as well as in its psychological effect. R. J. Wolff (1965) argued frictions between modern medical techniques and traditional beliefs among people in the Malay Peninsula. B. H. Kramer (1970), a graduate student specializing in medical anthropology, investigated the shamanic séance as traditional Malay treatment toward mental disorders. P. C. Y. Chen (1979), a physician trained in modern hospitals, observed séances in Kelantan, and assured its effectiveness in treating psychoneuroses and depression. C. Laderman (1991) paid large attention to symbolic humoral system, i.e. the inner winds (*angin*), among Malays, and compared these Malay theories to Western psychoanalysis through the dramatic aspect of shamanic rituals in the state of Trengganu, mainly based on C. Lévi-Strauss' view (1963: 186-206).

Regarding the shamanisms of Orang Asli groups, on the other hand, Skeat and C. O. Blagden (2008 [1906]) attempted to define the religious beliefs including the shamanistic practices of the three categories of Orang Asli groups, i.e. Proto-Malays, the Senoi, and the Negrito. I. Carey (1970) also dealt with the general social and cultural traits of the three categories of Orang Asli groups, in which he analyzed the social roles of shaman or medicine man. Endicott (1979: 128-141) analyzed the differences between ordinary humans, shamans (*hala' té'*), and spirits among the negrito Batek. S. Howell (1989) makes a detailed description of the cosmos of the Chewong, who speaks the negrito language with Senoi physical type. J. M. Fung (2004) represented the procedures and the paraphernalia of healing séance among the Semai which was one of the Senoi groups.

## **Shamanism of the Foragers in Sumatra**

In contrast with many studies on shamanisms in the Malay Peninsula,

those of the rainforest foragers in Sumatra are very few, except for shamanistic practice among the Kubu, who is hunter-gatherer in southern Sumatra. B. Hagen (1908) gave the brief description of shamanistic practices by Kubu shamans (*malim*) in his comprehensive ethnography. G. J. van Dongen (1910) analyzed Kubu shamans' cosmological concepts and social roles, and wrote down the procedures of their spirit-rising séance with words to thirty three songs that were sung in their séance. According to Ö. Sandbukt (1984), Kubu shamans are capable of going to the sky world to communicate with the God through their spirit possession, and often could establish and maintain matrimonial alliance with deities. As I mention in the next section and Chapter 4, traveling to sky world is important identical cosmology that is in common with the Akit, not with Malays.

In addition, Moszkowski recorded on shamans (*kěměntan*) of the Sakai as well as those of Akit in eastern Sumatra (1908a: 309-313; 1909a: 124-130). He made descriptions of his witness of their séances and the explanation of shamans' paraphernalia. He pointed out the resemblance between their shamanisms and the Malay magic as "the resemblance to similar ceremonies described by Skeat is so striking that I can pass them over (1909b: 712)."

## 2-2. Definition of Shaman

I would like to apply the word of "shaman" to Akit healers, *bomo*, and refer to beliefs and practices around the healers as "shamanism" in this thesis. Here, moreover, the term shaman means "a 'master of spirits', with the implication that this inspired priest incarnates spirits, becoming possessed voluntarily in controlled circumstances (Lewis 2003 [1971]: 49)." In other words, shamans are initiated by spirits and directly communicate with spirits through their controlled trance. Although *bomo* could also be regarded as spirit medium, healer, or occasionally priest, yet *bomo* seems to be shamans exclusively among the Akit.

Regarding this translation, it is necessary to examine some semantic issues of the terms for ritual specialists. The usages of such terms are becoming obsolete matters, according to Winzeler, although they sparked a good deal of controversy in the past several decades (1993a: xx-xxi). More and more freely scholars relatively apply the word "shaman", originally the Tungus word, to the similar type of ritual specialists in the other areas. As the Akit shamanism has

characteristic traits that should be considered in relation with the classical shamanisms, however, the examination of this matter seems to be essential task. Presumably, therefore, I shall have to give some comments upon the reason why the use of such terms has not been entirely consistent in the prior studies of the Malay spirit-rising séance. In addition, it is necessary to distinguish shamans from other religious masters with similar roles, who exist in Akit society as well as in other Malay societies. In this section, thus, I would like to examine, first of all, the definitions on shamanism in classical studies, secondly, the application of the terms in the prior studies of the Malay shamanic séances, and finally, the social distinction between *bomo* and another religious specialist, *pawang ladang*, among the Akit. After examining the definitions, the characteristic of the Akit shamanism compared with the Malay ones would be revealed, as well as the usage of the term would be clear.

## Mastery and Ecstasy

Firth gives the definitions of spirit possession, spirit mediumship, and shamanism, making mention of Malay shamans as follows:

*Spirit possession* is a form of trance in which behavior actions of a person are interpreted as evidence of a control of his behavior by a spirit normally external to him. *Spirit mediumship* is normally a form of possession in which the person is conceived as serving as an intermediary between spirits and men. The accent here is on communication; the actions and words of the medium must be translatable, which differentiates them from mere spirit possession or madness. *Shamanism* is a term I prefer to use in the North Asiatic sense, of a master of spirits. Normally himself a spirit medium, the shaman is thought to control spirits by ritual techniques, and in some societies, as in Kelantan (Malaya) he may not himself be in a trance state when he does this... (1959: 141 [the italics in original]).

He uses the term shaman as “a master of spirits” in this account. The expression shaman was defined first by S. M. Shirokogoroff with a list of the formal characters of shamanisms among the ethnic groups of Tungus and in Manchus society as follows:

- (1) The shaman is a master of spirits.

- (2) He has a group of mastered spirits.
- (3) There is a complex of methods and paraphernalia recognized and transmitted.
- (4) There is a theoretical justification of the practice.
- (5) The shamans assume a special social position (1935: 274).

In the additional explanation of (1) on the list, Shirokogoroff states that the phenomenon of “spirit possession” is naturally included in the abilities of shamans. Yet, he emphasizes that the shaman as a “master” possesses the spirits as his “servants” in the Tungus and Manchus shamanisms (1935: 271). In other words, the shaman controls the spirits at shaman’s will. At this point, Shirokogoroff differentiates shamans from usual spirit mediums in the other cultures or peoples who are accidentally possessed by spirits. In addition, he insists that the words “shaman” and “shamanism” should be used only in the cultural context of the Tungus or the Manchus.

In the famous study of *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (2004 [1951]), on the other hand, M. Eliade attempts to position shamanism as an archaic phenomenon that has been defused all over the world mainly depending on Siberian ethnographies including Shirokogoroff’s one, focusing on morphological and cosmological similarity. While he has not given the identical lists of the essential characteristics, the main stressed points are as follows: (1) there are the beliefs that many spirits in the cosmos help or harm human beings, some of whom can be controlled or influenced by shamans who have been chosen and initiated by spirits; (2) there are the beliefs that the cosmos itself consists of distinct levels that include, in general, upper world, middle world, and under world; (3) most importantly, initiated shamans have the abilities to go on spiritual journey to the other worlds in order to fetch lost souls of sick patients. In some instances, shamans go to the afterworld in order to guide souls of the dead. This journey may also be done by familiar spirits whom shamans order to do so (Eliade 2004 [1951]). In addition, Eliade emphasize the difference between ecstatic journey and spirit possession discussing that “the specific element of shamanism is not the embodiment of ‘spirits’ by the shaman, but the ecstasy induced by his ascent to the sky or descent to the underworld; incarnating spirits and being ‘possessed’ by spirits are universally disseminated phenomena, but they do not necessarily belong to shamanism in the strict sense (2004 [1951]: 499-500).” According to Eliade, in short, shamans’ or spirits’ ecstatic journey is more essential than shamans’ spirit possession for shamanism.

These concepts of “mastery of spirits” and “ecstatic journey” have been examined in detail by many scholars as original and narrowly conceived definitions of “classic” shamanism, in comparison with other practices involving trance, ecstasy, or altered states of consciousness (e.g. Jakobsen 1999). The reason why Akit *bomo* could be translated as shaman is that their practices and beliefs satisfy the both conditions attached by both Eliade and Shirokogoroff. The *bomo* is a master of spirits who controls spirits by ritual techniques (see Chapters 4 & 6), and has an ability to cross the boundaries of the worlds in his ecstatic journey (see Chapter 4). The Akit *bomo* would be more appropriately described as shaman rather than spirit medium.

### Application of “Shamanism” for Malay Spirit Mediumship

Some anthropologists do not use the terms of “shaman” or “shamanism”, but “sprit medium” and “spirit mediumship” in their studies on the Malay spirit-rising séance (Firth 1967; Kessler 1977), even after the views of Shirokogoroff and Eliade have been introduced. Although both Firth and Kessler do not mention the reason, they do not want partly because the Malay spirit-rising séances, especially in Kelantan, contain miscellaneous elements with vague purposes. While Gimlette (1971 [1915]:73-77,100-105) and Cuisinier (1936:38-83) note several kinds of séances distinguished by their purposes and procedures in Kelantan, Kessler (1977:297) says that these have been replaced increasingly by the ritual of *main petri*. In the process of the integration, their ritual would absorb miscellaneous purposes and procedures, such as healing, divination, and blessing festive rites such as anniversary or wedding, as well as dances and songs by patients and audiences, orchestra’s playing, and even shadow plays (*wayang kulit*) or Malay opera (*mak yong*). In the end, Firth (1967) discusses the *main petri* as sheer entertainment or social drama rather than ritual, and Eliade suggests on the Malay séance that “it does not seem to that such magical dances and cures should be regarded as shamanic phenomena in the strict sense of the term (2004[1951]: 346).”

In the context of definition, the Malay magical practices lack the “classic” or narrowly conceived conditions of shamanism generally. The Malay séances often include the spontaneous or accidental spirit possessions of patients and assistants, of which spirits are not controlled. The Malay shamanism does not emphasize shamans’ ecstatic journey generally, either (Winzeler 2004: 836-839). In more recent accounts, however, the Malay trance performances and spirit

mediumship are reported as shamanism (e.g. Endicott 1979; Laderman 1991; Winzeler 1993; Walter and Fridman 2004).

Lewis (1986: 78-80) points suggestively out that the use of such terms is a matter of national academic tradition. He discusses the way how the term shaman is found more in studies by American anthropologists and European continental scholars, while the spirit medium is more commonly found in British social anthropology. As Amerindians, in which American anthropologists have mainly been interested, have to be discussed in relation with northern Asia, the anthropologists are fond of using the terms shaman and shamanism. Continental scholars, who have been interested in Euro-Asiatic religion, use them in the same reason. On the other hand, British social anthropologists rarely connect the African ritual practices with the classic shamanism, and so they account it as spirit mediumship.

### ***Bomoh and Pawang***

Here, moreover, I have to distinguish between *bomoh* and *pawang*. Both often co-exist in the same Malay village in the peninsula, and both equip themselves with the role of a spirit medium as well as a priest. The latter is a specialist who performs various rituals, often involving sacrifice, based on the routine learning of standardized knowledges and procedures. Mohd. Taib Osman makes mention of difference between *bomoh* and *pawang* as follows:

... “pawang” and “bomoh”. While some people may use the terms interchangeably, the former usually refers to the *shaman* who is able to communicate with the spirit world and conducts such rituals as opening virgin land, propitiating the spirits of the sea for the fishermen or the pacification of spirits which are supposed to haunt a place. The *bomoh*, on the other hand, usually refers to the specialist who tends the sick and cures illness. However, ... *pawang* too is involved in curing rites... (1976: 17).

Indeed, both also co-exist in one Akit village, i.e. *bomo* and *pawang ladang* (*pawang* of field), but they assume as the different roles. While *bomo* mainly participates in healing, *pawang ladang* manages offering ritual of *ancak* (sacrificial tray; see Skeat 1900: 235-249) for his hamlet in the case of opening virgin land or of the beginning or ending of rice harvest.

I would translate the Akit *pawang ladang* into “priest”, in opposition to Mhd. Taib Osman’s view on the Malay terms. As for the reason, first of all, the *pawang ladang* in Akit society is not a spirit medium initiated by spirits, but a ritual practitioner who has learned specific knowledges and procedures to hold the ritual of offering tray. In other words, anyone who learns spells and process of the ritual of sacrificial tray could become a *pawang ladang*. He does not fall into voluntary trance; he can communicate with the spirits only in his dream. Secondly, what he is concerned in is the matters only on spirits around rice fields; he never participates in curing activities. According to villagers, the role of *pawang ladang* was introduced by Malays only a few generations ago, in the process of that the rice cultivation on dry field had prevailed among the Akit.

### **3. Shamanic Power in Social Order**

In one word, the most important activity for Akit shamans is communicating with super natural spirits to benefit villages or villagers. Shamans act as healer to cure patients who suffer from illness derived from spirits. As priest, they maintain or recover good relationships between themselves and spirits, between patients and spirits, or between villagers and spirits. During rituals to accomplish these purposes, Akit shamans fall into a trance to listen to spirits' voices and to see their figures. In addition, they make incarnations, manipulate paraphernalia, and dedicate appreciate offerings to control spirits. In this chapter, shamans' statuses or their roles derived from the activities and the way how they obtain skills and knowledges shall be described.

While I conducted my field research, there were total fifty-two Akit shamans in the two villages of Titi Akar (twenty-nine shamans) and Hutan Panjang (twenty-three shamans). Although it is said that both men and women could become shamans, there was no more than one female shaman in the village of Hutan Panjang. However, this case is exceptional. In this thesis, therefore, I use the personal pronouns singular he or his, when I refer to a shaman. Shamans hold séances frequently in each hamlet, and I succeeded in observing those séances more than two hundred times during my research period.

#### **3-1. Shamanic Power in Society**

##### **Shamanism as "Central Cult"**

Lewis argues that the incidents of spirit possession cult and ecstatic cult are not random but follow certain social structural patterns or channels. The spirit possession is generally concentrated among the people of inferior and marginal status, especially women. On the other hand, the ecstatic cult is utilized for strengthening political, religious, and social authority by the central people of a society. He refers to the former as peripheral cult and to the latter as



central cult. He also points out that ecstatic cult or central cult is apt to emerge in small societies which are under the pressure of world religions or state organizations, and that it takes a large role in the sphere of morality within the community (2003 [1971])

Following on his argument, Kessler considers the Kelantanese spirit mediumship as the peripheral cult, which reflects social stresses and gender hostility. As the status of women is difficult and stressful in Kelantan, they express their dissatisfactions and demands in the daily life to males as the spirit's words and behavior in the séance. Although their traditional healers are male in general, almost patients requesting the séances are female (1977: 301-303).

On the contrary, the Akit shamanism could be considered rather as central cult. All ritual practices are generically called "technique of headman (*ilmu batin*).” In the village of Hutan Panjang, its headman was or is always a shaman, and occasionally he conducts séances for the purpose of benefiting its community. At the previous night of the Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia, the headman holds a séance in the front court of the village primary school together with the children. In Akit society, all knowledges and skills of ritual practices including shamanic séances are attributed solely to the traditional headman's authority. Spontaneous spirit possession rarely occurs. In short, the Akit shamanism is in the center of their religious practice and beliefs under the external pressure of the Chinese and Islamic Malays. It is considerably relevant to the political authorities and the social ties in the mainstream of their social life.

According to Carey, an important condition becoming headmen is gaining shamanic powers among Orang Asli groups of the Negrito, the Jakun, and the Temuan in the Malay Peninsula (1976: 101, 230, 242), where shamans' ecstatic powers are emphasized as among the Akit.

Although Lewis emphasizes morality as a trait of central cult (2003 [1971]), the Akit shamanism is less functional in this sphere. In the healing séances, Akit shamans do not protest patients' behaviors through their spirit possessions. Witchcraft, which is a method of mystic attacks in tension-fraught relationships between humans, is rarely observed as the cause of maladies (see Chapter 4). Even if witchcraft is recognized, there is a tacit consent among villagers that shamans do not tell patients' family members the witches' names. A confession of guilt is never made, while it is frequently done, for instance, among the Eskimo (see Eliade 2004 [1951]: 289). In conclusion, therefore, the Akit shamanism could be positioned in between the central cult and the

peripheral cult, as its shamanism does not contain all aspects of the central cult.

Among mixed-blooded Chinese, (see Chapter 1), shamanic practices are used in order to emphasize their affiliation with the Akit. Most mixed Chinese share all the aspects of daily life with Akit people, such as language, economic activity, and communal life. However, they still hold Chinese descent system and follow their traditions which are different from Akit ones. Such ambiguous status of mixed Chinese seems to drive them to join either in the Akit shamanism or in the Chinese shamanism. According to my research, a quarter of the total number of Akit shamans is mixed Chinese. The most reputed shaman in the village of Titi Akar is a mixed Chinese. Indeed, most of these shamans have strong social ties with Akit villagers, and they occasionally introduce themselves as Akit people. However, some mixed Chinese take the role of Chinese shamans, referred to as *bomo Cina*, *tankih*, or *kiton*. These Chinese shamans live in the villages of Titi Akar and Hutan Panjang. Such shamans frequently go to Chinese temples and try to strengthen social affiliation with original Chinese. Although the Akit shamanism could be regarded as central cult within the Akit community, the incidence of shamanic practices among the mixed Chinese seems to emerge along the structural ambiguity of their status between the ethnic groups of Akit and the Chinese as a kind of the peripheral cult.

## Shamanism in Various Social Contexts

Whereas most shamans enroll themselves at Buddhist, the influence from world religions on the Akit shamanism is limited. In the 1960's, a Batak clergyman built the first Protestant church in the hamlet of Hutan Rayu (see Map 2), and most villagers including shamans living in the hamlet became to join in the faith. As the church tried to do away with traditional religious practices such as shamanism, ancestral worship, and so on, some shamans dropped their roles and other shamans became only nominal Christian believers. In the 1980's, one Buddhist temple was built at the center of the village of Titi Akar, where many Chinese and mixed-blooded Chinese lived. As Chinese-type Buddhism showed the tolerant attitude toward other religious practices, non-Christian Akit villagers including headmen or shamans became Buddhists. At present, nominal Buddhists are majority among the Akit, especially among shamans. According to my investigation, forty-five out of all the fifty-two Akit shamans were Buddhists. However, world religions seem not to affect the

increasing or decreasing number of shamans. Villagers say that the total number has not been on the increase or decrease dramatically for the last five decades, either.

Healing séances are main events performed by shamans during which they try to cure villagers of disease, but the séances are regarded as important mutual occasions of hamlets and inhabitants. In the afternoon just before starting a healing séance, a dozen of helpers gather in a patient's house, and they start preparing the séance. Men build small model houses and boats, both of which are named *humah hantu* (see Chapter 6). It usually takes two men more than one hour to finish building a small one. Because from two to four pieces of houses or boats are prepared for one patient as offerings to spirits, building them needs many helpers. For example, I observed that people made twelve pieces of houses or boats at a day. As the séances were held for three consecutive evenings, therefore, they prepared thirty-six pieces of houses and boats for three days. In this case, almost men from the hamlet as well as some men from the other hamlets came to the patient's house by turns for the preparation. Women cook rice and confectionaries as offerings. It is a young men's job to take model houses into the rainforest or over the sea during the séance. These helping activities are considered as an obligatory mutual reciprocity among neighbors.

When a patient would like to hold a healing séance, he or she approaches a shaman who normally lives in the same village, following his or her everyday social tie with the shaman. Shamans are not allowed to ask patients a good sum or material things. While there is no clear rule on paying remuneration of healing ritual to shamans, a small amount of money, cigarettes, and any other things may be gifted to shamans in consideration of the séance. Usually, in addition, villagers do not attach importance to shamans' experiences and reputations, but to their personalities and everyday relationships between villagers and shamans. The Akit shamanism, therefore, consists in social reliance between the villagers.

Villagers generally could choose either shamanic treatments or modern medical ones, but occasionally they use both. According to cosmological thinking among the Akit, some parts of the illnesses are caused by supernatural powers, and other parts are not. Symptoms, for which shamanic treatments are needed, have a general tendency, viz. mental disorders, chronic diseases, sterilities, poor health conditions of babies or aged, and poor recoveries after receiving modern medical cares (cf. Kessler 1977: 301). Against these symptoms, modern medical treatments are not always effective. On the other hand, adults' ordinary fever,

injury, diarrhea, and malaria are treated by modern medical doctors. If conditions are serious, however, villagers try to look for the both treatments. According to my observation, for example, a healing séance was held for a critically ill patient who was being put on a drip by a modern medical doctor. In the other case, a man who had undergone a surgery in the town of Dumai asked a shaman the healing ritual for the purpose of further improving his physical condition. The acceptance of both modern medical treatments and traditional treatments might partly contribute to the chronic existence of the shamanistic institution among the Akit. Wolff states on Malay attitudes toward diseases as follows:

To the Malay,...there is no need to assume a single theory to explain the causality of disease—disease, like any other phenomenon of natural world, is many-faceted and essentially incomprehensible in the sense that no single theory will cover all known facts perfectly (Wolff 1965: 345).

An Akit villager says to me, “neither modern doctor nor shaman will be lost in the future.”

### **3-2. Succeeding Shamanic Powers**

Although anybody could become a shaman, the first step to be a new shaman is feeling vocation from spirits. It is said that all shamanic knowledges could be obtained only directly from spirits that may appear in a dream. In order to be recognized as skillful healer by villagers, however, it is necessary to learn additional knowledges under established shamans, and to participate in initiatory rituals held by such established master shamans as the second step.

### **Shaman and Medicine Man**

While I define Akit healers (*bomo*) as shaman in Chapter 2, strictly speaking, all *bomo* are not shamans; there are some *bomo* who cannot use the technique of voluntary spirit possession. These *bomo* should be classified as medicine men. Real shamans who could fall into a trance for purpose of patients' treatments are referred to as big healers (*bomo besah*) or healers possessing

Malay spirits (*bomo behantu Melayu*) in the Akit language. On the other hand, medicine men are called small healers (*bomo kecil*) or healers of spells and guards (*bomo tawah-jegeh*).

Medicine men are the people who learn ample shamanic knowledges under master shamans, but they have not experienced spontaneous vocation from spirits. Because they have healing knowledges in common with shamans, they may hold healing rituals by themselves alone. In the hearing ritual, medicine men make up a prescription for patients and try to dedicate offerings to spirits, in the same way with shamans. However, medicine men cannot diagnose the spiritual causes of illness correctly because they do not succeed in communicating with spirits during possessions (cf. Chapter 5). They could communicate with spirits during dreaming, though. According to villagers, healing rituals by shamans are more secure and effective against illnesses than rituals by medicine men, as shamans could gather information about spirits more correctly with their techniques of spirit possession. Medicine men usually attend healing séances as shamans' main assistants (*bebayu*), although as far as I know only two medicine men exist in the two villages of Titi Akar and Hutan Panjang.

## Vocation and Learning Knowledges

As is often the case with shamanisms of elsewhere, shamanic vocation is manifested in the form of something like mental disorder. Candidates become meditative, seem to be somatic absent-minded, sing senseless songs, refuse foods, and sometimes have sporadic seizures, which usually continue for a half year or more. For example, a shaman in the village of Titi Akar experienced serious ill sort of symptom for a long time. Although he had shaman father, he did not learn any shamanic knowledges from his father because he did not believe it. After his father died, he suffered from serious discomfort and he became unable to eat solid food or to remember anything. He wept without any reasons, sang senseless songs, and wandered aimlessly around his hamlet. Three years later, spirits that had been the familiar of his father appeared in his dream, and told him that his trouble was caused by them. The spirits said to him, "If you succeed to your father's task, you will be healthy again." He started to learn spells to incarnate spirits from them during his dream, as well as to learn knowledges of healing séances under an established shaman. His problem was solved, and then initiatory ritual was held by his master shaman.

Eventually, he became an established shaman in the village of Titi Akar. This process is in accordance with the usual cases of the way how people become shamans. This often happens to villagers whose family members were or are not shamans as well.

Some children are taught shamanic spells or procedures of séances by master shamans. When these children are in their twenties, they usually experience spontaneous vocation in the dream or in the form of something like disorder. Normally, the first-experienced possessions are relatively mild and for a short term, because they have already learned how to control spirits from their master shamans. After initiation rites, they become new shamans. These shamans are generally more reputable than usual shamans. The apprentices, who do not succeed in feeling a spontaneous vocation, are obliged to become medicine men.

According to my research, there is another rather exceptional case that a person who became a shaman without suffering from something like illness, receiving initiation, or studying under master shamans. One day he went fishing by canoe, and, according to him, he suddenly “died” at sea. He drifted over the sea for half a day, and then he recovered his consciousness. During his unconsciousness, spirits asked him to dedicate a large model castle made of hard woods (*balai kayu*; see Chapter 6) to themselves. After this incident, spirits frequently appeared in his dream, and taught shamanic knowledges to him. In the end, he became a shaman, and he holds the purifying and offering ritual once a year for these spirits. He is rarely asked to hold healing séances by villagers, though.

Apprentices learn several kinds of spells in order to summon assistant spirits (see Chapter 4). These spirits are referred to as inherited spirits (*hantu ketukhunan*), which are considered to be faithful to shamans. Apprentices normally succeed to their master shamans’ assistant spirits. If one apprentice’s master shaman is not his father shaman, of course, his assistant spirits are different from his father’s. When his father shaman dies young, he has to look for another master shaman. Even if two shamans have two spirits of the same name, each spirit is considered to be different. If those two shamans are apprentice and master, however, both are the same spirits. In addition to assistant spirits, there are free spirits who are referred to as *hantu tempayan angin*. They occasionally invade shamans’ minds by accident during the séance. Their supernatural powers are considered to be rather unstable than those of assistant spirits.

Requisite shamanic knowledges include the secret intelligence of words.

Table 1 shows some examples of such secret words on paraphernalia during the séance (see Chapter 6). Although most of these words are almost in common among shamans, there are some variations per shaman. Some shamans use partly different words depending on which kinds of assistant spirits are possessing him at the point. During séances, therefore, many audiences normally do not succeed in understanding shamans' words. Apparently, shamans' human assistants could understand such words, as they learn. Every time each shaman uses the same person as main human assistant.

As for shamanic secret words all over the world, Eliade (2004 [1951]: 96-99) points out their similarity to "animal language" in connection with the fact that shamans may be transformed into animals or birds during séances. However, the Akit secret words consist only of metaphorical words. These may probably have more esoteric essences in the social context.

## Initiation

Initiatory rituals are called "using casting net (*bejala*)", each of which is held at the same time as the purifying and offering ritual at the New Year. During the ritual, special paraphernalia such as spirit boats or model castles are needed (see Chapter 5). At that time, either a special pole (*meligai*) with one stage at its top or a tower (*sekahu*) with one stage at its top is constructed in front of the house of each master shaman. The pole is equipped with a ladder in front, and the tower with staircase. Both the pole and the tower are three, five, seven, nine, or eleven *depa* in height. The linear measure *depa* is used among the Akit. As one *depa* is one point eight meters, the highest tower and pole reach a height of no less than twelve meters.

During the séance of initiation rite, a master shaman and an initiate stay on the stage at the top of the pole or the tower. The initiate's head is covered by several pieces of small casting nets (*jala*). These nets are made of soft timbers from stemless thorny marsh palms (*kelubi*). The master shaman opens the initiate's eyes, ears, and mouth with a key symbolically. The key is normally made of metal and it is allegedly inherited from the shaman's ancestors. In consequence, the initiate is said to be able to look at spirits' figures, listen to their voices, and speak to villagers by their words. The number of the casting nets covered on the initiate's head is nine pieces at the first séance, and the number reduces one piece by one for each séance. In the ninth séance, finally, the last piece is removed. Initiatory rituals cost them much, and so they are

often held at the same time as the usual purifying and offering ritual at the New Year.

Eliade argues that ritual climb on a tree is a typical way of initiation all over the world, and he points out that the numbers of seven or nine have important meaning for the initiation (2004 [1951]: 122-125; 274-279). The Akit initiation ritual is parallel to his argument, although the number of seven is traditionally sacred in the Malay world (Skeat 1900: 508-509).

Once an initiate succeed in becoming a shaman, he has to hold séances as a matter of duty on a regular basis, in order to keep his agreement with his assistant spirits. He has to conduct the purifying and offering rituals twice or three times a year in his house, preparing many offerings. Shamans are not allowed to refuse any requests from villagers to hold healing rituals, without any appropriate reasons. If shamans break this rule, they are believed to suffer from maladies caused by familiar spirits.

In terms of supernatural power, according to Winstedt (1951: 7-8), hereditary magicians are reputed and superior to initiated magicians among Malays, because the former could receive enough magical knowledges from his kindred members. Winstedt argues that the development of settled agricultural society encourages the increase of the initiated magicians with no hereditary, as detailed magical insight to spiritual existence in the nature is no longer essential. In Akit society, the hereditary quality for shamans is not so emphasized, but shamans' skillfulness as healer is thought to depend on the quantity of magical knowledges derived from master shamans belonging to elder generations. In addition, the existence of many shamans who less participate in healing séances could also probably be explained by the development of settled agricultural life among the Akit in resent years.



## 4. Cosmological Backgrounds

Although the Akit has the mythology of a high god who is believed to have created the heaven and earth, the myth does not play a significant role in their daily ritual lines. The high god is supposed never to be centered at secular world. Even the personal name of the high god is no longer remembered by villagers. More important cosmological world among the Akit roots in their “animistic” beliefs, in which we could observe the Akit concepts of spirits and souls composing fundamental features of shamanism.

This chapter will not give the holistic description of the Akit “animistic” beliefs. Only the essential topics concerning the Akit shamanism, viz. the structure of the universe, spirits, souls, and witchcraft shall be discussed. Although these concepts are not always recognized in detail by villagers, these topics are deeply related to the role of shamans or to the cause of illnesses, which are often embodied clearly in the discourse of shamans or the procedures of séances.

### 4-1. Structure of the Universe

#### Multi-Layered World and Ecstasy

I succeed in obtaining two folktales on “the first shaman” during my research. The first one was recorded in the village of Hutan Panjang, and the second one in the village of Titi Akar. While both plots are different, each illustrates the essences of the Akit shamanism.

- (1) The first *bomo* was the eldest son of Adam who had been created first by God. His name was Komantan. At the seventh day of his birth, he became unconscious from an unknown cause. He stuck out his legs and arms, rolled his eyes back, and suffered from a strong convulsion. Although his parents felt much anxiety about these symptoms, they calmed down a few hours later. He also recovered his conscious without any aftereffects.

Komantan grew up in good health, but the similar symptoms befell him occasionally throughout his childhood. At his seventh years of age, Komantan said to his father, Adam, "I want to live in the sky (*atas dunia*).” Adam smiled, and asked him, "How do you go to the sky, much more, to live in?" The child answered, "On the sky, there is a similar world like here.” The father asked again, "Why do you know the world?" He replied, "I know it, because I occasionally go to the sky world.”

Komantan requested his father to prepare seven drums, a pair of jars, and various paraphernalia at an isolated hut. He secluded himself in the hut and prohibited his parents to come close there at the night. In the middle of one night, a whirlwind occurred around the hut. The next morning, Adam realized that the hut disappeared. The last night’s whirlwind blew it up into the sky, leaving the traces of its foundation.

Many years later, old Adam fell into critical physical condition. His offsprings did not know what to do, and they decided to inform his condition to the eldest son, Komantan, living over the sky. They burned incenses for the purpose of sending the smoke to the sky world. After a while, the rhythm of drums began to be heard from the sky, and a flash fell in front of them. Though the figure was invisible, Komantan as a spirit came down to the earth and treated his father. After the treatment, Komantan promised to his siblings to come again and help them together with a group of spirits when their family would fall into illness. Then, he went back to his world again with a flash.

After this occurrence, people could manage to call spirits from the sky in order to ask for their helps.

(2) Once upon a time, there was the first *bomo*, named Satun. He knew very strong healing magic, and so he could bring dead people back to life by his healing ritual.

One day, his small daughter suffered from a serious disease. He was so anxious that he held a healing ritual for her, together with seven drummers and audiences in his house. Unfortunately, however, the ritual was not effective for the living, but the dead. The daughter died, and he did not succeed in bringing her back to life. His assistant spirits were very ashamed of this failure and they intended to hide themselves. Then, the spirits took Satun, his daughter’s body, his house, seven drummers, and audiences who attended the ritual, to the sky.

After this happening, a person who would like to be a shaman could

occasionally catch the rhythm of the seven drums from the sky. The rhythm is thought to be an omen to be called by spirits at the afternoon of the thirteenth, the fourteenth, the fifteenth days on the lunar calendar. The seven drummers are believed to play the rhythm, which is named rhythm of seven drums (*lagu ketobong tujuh*).

What these two folktales contain in common is the story of “flying house”, first of all. This motif implies that there is another world over the sky, and that shaman could cross the boundary between land and sky. Indeed, the Akit cosmos contain the upper world (*atas dunia*) of a high god and assistant spirits, the middle world of human beings, and the lower world (*bawah tanah*) of the dead. Akit shamans have ability to travel to other worlds in order to dedicate offerings or in order to look for patients’ souls through their trances during the séance (see Chapter 5). Secondly, the two folktales provide that assistant spirits living in the upper world help human beings if necessary. During the séance, shamans call assistant spirits mainly from the upper world into shamans’ bodies, and receive spirits’ supernatural powers from them for the purpose of treatments.

Judging from the folklores concerning shamans’ origin, the concepts of “magical flight” and “spirit possession” also co-exist in the Akit shamanism. Although Eliade regards the concept of “magical flight” or “ecstasy” as more historically archaic and fundamental than “spirit possession” in the world shamanisms (2004 [1951]), the both concepts among the Akit are complicatedly tangled and inseparable, not only in folklores, but also in actual séances. According to a cross cultural study on world-wide shamanisms by L. G. Peters and D. Price-Williams, eleven cultures have the both concepts, viz. magical flight and spirit possession, out of total forty-two cultures investigated (1980: 403).

The proper noun “*Komantan*” presented in both folktales was also mentioned by Moszkowski. According to him, the name “*kēměntan*” (1908b; 1909a) means “shaman” in both Akit and Sakai societies who have lived in the basin of the Siak River. According to my research, the Sakai still refers to their shamans as *komantan* or *bomo*. It is probable that *komantan* may be old and original term to indicate shamans among rainforest foragers around eastern Sumatra. Among the present Akit, the first spell for the sake of falling into a trance used by some shamans is called the Komantan’s spell (*tawah komantan*). In addition, the rhythm of seven drums in the second Akit folklore is occasionally referred to as Komantan’s rhythm (*lagu komantan*). This rhysm is

widely distributed to many shamans as repertory of drumming rhythm.

## Division of Land and Sea

In addition to the vertical cosmological plurality, the horizontal division between land (*dakhāt*) and sea (*laut*) on the middle human world is also observed (see Figure 1). This division is not geographical regions, but environmental. Accordingly, sea includes sea, rivers, straights and channels. Land, on the other, indicates rainforest (*hutan*) in particular. In the Akit cosmology, sea and land are the abodes of free spirits, either benevolent or malevolent (see Figure 1), while the middle world is centered by hamlets resided by human beings.

Free spirits could be classified into land spirits (*hantu dakhāt*) and sea spirits (*hantu laut*), based on their abodes. As both natures are separated, offerings for land spirits and ones for sea spirits are also completely different. When villagers provide appropriate offerings to spirits, these spirits would give guardianships to them or stop malevolent interferences in return for the offerings. When inappropriate offerings are provided, however, spirits bring misfortunes about to the villagers. Villagers, therefore, try to avoid making inappropriate offerings even in their daily lives. For example, using bites from land, such as meats or earthworms, for sea fishing is absolutely forbidden, because sea spirits may censure villagers for such confusion. In terms of offerings, in addition, both spirits have to be treated fairly equal during séances. If people gave offerings to spirits of one side only, spirits of the other side would be angry and bring about mischiefs. In general, however, fewer offerings are given to sea spirits than to land spirits. According to villagers, as sea spirits are relatively more powerful and more malevolent than land spirits, if people gave equal offerings to both spirits, sea spirits would become too powerful against land spirits. The upset of the balance between the powers of sea spirits and land spirits may also bring misfortunes about to the villagers.

During healing séances, shamans dispatch their assistant spirits one by one to land and to sea. Their assistant spirits try to find out the abodes of evil spirits that bring illness to patients. By help of assistant spirits, shamans could recognize proper offerings to the evil spirits and proper ways of treatments to patients. Although assistant spirits that shamans use are said to live in the upper world, they are also divided into land spirits and sea spirits. During purifying and offering rituals, shamans have to prepare two model castles

(*balai*) for land spirits and one spirit boat (*lancang*) for sea spirits in order to calm the spirits down or entertain them. The detailed variations of offerings to land and sea spirits shall be described in Chapter 6.

In comparison with the Malay magical world, the cosmological trait of the Akit shamanism is expressed in the vertical divisions of the cosmos (see Figure 1). The Malay cosmology does not emphasize the existences of the upper world or the lower world in their shamanistic contexts. According to Sandbukt, however, the Kubu also has the cosmology including the upper world, and Kubu shamans (*malim*) take offerings to the deities living in the sky world (1984: 88-93). The Chewong cosmos has eight layers. The seventh layer is our human world. Chewong shamans (*putao*) could travel to all the different worlds during sleep or during trance (Howell 1986: 58-64). On the other hand, the horizontal division between sea and land is the basic cosmology even in the Malay magical world. Endicott divides the Malay world into four realms, viz. water, rainforest, earth, and habitation of man. He also points out that Malays discriminate between land spirits and sea ones, but they treat both spirits relatively equal during rituals (1970: 96-119), like Akit offerings.

In the structure of Akit multiple worlds, Akit shamans travel between metaphysical boundaries, which Eliade (2004 [1951]) assures as an essential characteristic in the narrowly conceived definition of shamanism.

## 4-2. Spirits

The Akit refers to spirits as “*hantu*” or “*antu*”, in the same way with Malays. In Akit society, the general term “*hantu*” means every kind of spirits in a broad sense which include free spirits, familiars, genies, and tutelary spirits. In the context of their shamanism, however, the word “*hantu*” exclusively means the familiar spirits used by shamans. Malevolent free spirits against human beings are referred to as demon (*setan*). The spirit of *makha* is a kind of malevolent spirit, which resides inside human body, *gin* (genie) has both good and bad characters in accordance with the villagers’ attitudes toward them, and *datok* is a tutelary spirit living at the cape, in the forest, and so on. The last spirit is believed to protect human beings from mischiefs. The same named spirits could be found out all over the Malay magical world, but their characters or natures vary from place to place. Islamic Malays living in southern Thailand, for example, the *hantu* is thoroughly malevolent and evil existence, while genies

have both good and bad faces (Fraser 1960: 169), like Akit genies.

## Assistant Spirits

One shaman usually uses some dozens of assistant spirits. Many assistant spirits are equipped with personal characters, but some of them not. The characters of assistant spirits are represented in shamans' actions, their clothes, or rhythms of drums. While almost assistant spirits are benevolent to human beings, a few of them are malevolent. Assistant spirits are occasionally called Islamic spirits (*hantu Islam*).

The assistant spirit of *bujang* is the most prevailed and representative among Akit shamans. Although the word *bujang* means "single", "solitary", or "bachelor" in standard Malay and in Bahasa Indonesia (Wilkinson 1959: 159), Maxwell argues that the word *bujang* was derived from a Sanskrit word *bhujangga*, and originally meant "dragon" (1881: 28). This spirit is believed to participate in various roles during séances in relevant to ecstatic journey toward the sky or magical flight. For instance, during purifying and offering séances the spirit of *bujang* helps to send shamans to the sky. The spirit is, moreover, dispatched by shamans to go and come between land and sea for the purpose of seeking malevolent spirits during healing séances. It has both land and sea attributes, which is very exceptional. In general, this spirit has the own personal name, such as *bujang* of freedom (*bujang bebas*) or *bujang* of lifting (*bujang bongkah*). Almost all shamans in the village of Hutan Panjang and some shamans in the village of Titi Akar say that this kind of spirit has the strongest supernatural power in their assistant spirits.

The spirit of *hulubalang* (commander or war-chief) is also a popular assistant spirit living on land. Shamans possessed by this spirit are believed to succeed in fighting against evil spirits with a knife during healing séances. Among the shamans in the village of Titi Akar, this spirit is considered as the strongest spirit in their assistant spirits. The spirit of *bawah bumi* (underground) is living under the ground. This spirit takes an essential role when shamans go to their ecstatic journey into the lower world in order to look for patients' departed souls. The spirit of *gendong* is a female spirit on land. Some shamans possessed by this spirit may change from their male clothes into female ones, and they may sing songs with high tone like a woman. This spirit is acknowledged as heroine of the folklore called *Gendong's story* (*Cerita Gendong*). The spirits of *datok tanjung*, *bujang jawa*, *datok sakti*, *belayah*, and so forth are

all sea spirits. They are said to have powerful authorities over evil sea spirits. Some shamans in the village of Titi Akar use the spirit of *banan*, a spirit of wild boar, living in the rainforest. This animal spirit is regarded as malevolent one, but it sometimes works for human beings under the leadership of the spirit of *hulubalang*. Shamans possessed by this animal spirit walk on all fours, roar, and lick the patients' bodies with their tongue.

Besides main assistant spirits, some minor assistant spirits exist. However, such spirits are continuously being forgotten or being created from generation to generation. According to old villagers, for instance, the assistant spirit of crocodile used to be used by shamans. These days, however, nobody use it anymore. On the other hand, some shamans are using a completely new assistant spirit. A shaman in the village of Titi Akar uses a spirit which has the name of an Akit who died fifty years ago.

It is uncommon that Akit shamans make marital relationship with the assistant spirits, while it is quite common among the Kubu (Sandbukt 1984: 92), as well as all over the world (Eliade 2004[1951]). The relationship between assistant spirits and Akit shamans would be rather maintained by reciprocal offerings or by helping relationships. Akit shamans give offerings periodically to spirits, and in return spirits help the shamans if necessary. Some shamans say that it is not until negotiating with spirits in their dreams that they could decide which kinds of offerings should be given to spirits during the yearly purifying and offering rituals.

While the similar spirits having the same names as Akit spirits are found along the shamanisms among the other rainforest foragers in Sumatra, every spirit often carries a different meaning. As mentioned above, for example, *komantan* is a spirit name among the contemporary Akit, but it means "shaman" in Sakai society. The assistant spirit of *hulubalang* indicates a shaman's main human assistant among the Kubu (Dongen 1910; Loeb 1935). These resemblances of the terms might show that the shamanisms of these ethnic groups share the same origin or influences, but that their replacements would imply the dynamic aspect of these shamanistic terms.

Although almost all former studies referred to the tiger spirit which was sacred and essential in magic arts and shamanisms in the Malay Peninsula, including the Orang Asli shamanism (Skeat 1900: 436-457; Cuisinier 1936: 38; Carey 1976; Endicott 1979: 139-141; Winstedt 1951[1925]: 57-58; Zainal-Abidin 1922), yet there is no Akit shaman who uses such a spirit. However, it is said that the tiger spirit used to exist in the past, and even now some Akit shamans in a trance occasionally imitate an animal movement with whole bodies.

Apparently they look like tigers, although they are believed to be possessed by non-animal spirits. These signs would explain that the tiger spirit has lost its divinity and it has been assimilated into other spirits, as real tigers do not inhabit Rupat Island.

## Malevolent Spirits

Evil spirits could be classified into three categories, i.e. demon spirits (*setan*), genies (*gin*), and mischief (*makha*). Although these evil spirits used to have their own personal names from Akit folklores, villagers recognize only their vague categories at present. However, shamans often give compound names to these malevolent spirits as the result of their diagnosis, such as demon of flower (*setan bunga*), mischief of tiger (*makha hakhimau*), and so on.

Demon spirits (*setan*) are malevolent free spirits living at sea or in the forest. When people step into their domains or break their rules, mischiefs are believed to happen to them or to their families. Demons are regarded as the most common causers of illness. General indispositions or diseases with pain are often attributed to the demons.

Genies (*gin*) have both good and bad faces, while demon spirits show completely malevolent entity. In olden times, some villagers kept genies in their houses giving offerings to it once a month in order to have good luck. In addition, some shamans are using genies as assistant spirits, which are called white genies (*gin putih*). Genies carry mischief onto villagers, however, when they neglect their duties to give offerings to genies. Such villagers are believed to become insane and die in the end. The magical power of genies is thought to be much stronger than that of demons. People believe that it is absolutely impossible to persuade angry genies, while it is possible to negotiate with demons with the aid of assistant spirits during séances.

The substance of mischiefs (*makha*) resides inside human bodies and this evil spirits cause mental disorder. People could inherit the substance of each mischief from their ancestors, and occasionally it moves between spouses. As for the characteristic of the spirit of mischief, it is frequently connected with pregnancy or childbirth. Sterility and repeated baby's death are attributed to the malady of this spirit. We cannot drive this spirit away. Only what we could do is calming this spirit down with special offerings. The special offerings consist of two pairs of model houses (*humah sesak* and *humah saleng kancing*), and the rituals held repeatedly over several months. This spirit might be



related to the concept of *badi* that is well known in the Malay Peninsula (see Skeat 1900: 427-428; Annandale 1903b; Laderman 1991).

## Tutelary Spirits and *Kekhamat*

In former days, according to villagers, there were many shrines or altars (*kekhamat*) for tutelary spirits (*datok*) at capes or along the coast facing the sea. While most of them have been decayed, some shrines are still kept. The shrine of *datok sakti* is one of the most important shrines in Rupert Island. It exists on the riverbank of the Raya River, near the hamlet of Sungai Raya that is regarded as the oldest Akit hamlet in Rupert Island (see map 2). This shrine is worshipped mainly by villagers from the village of Hutan Panjang. Another important shrine is that of *datok kebeneh* that is in the rainforest called Penonton, situated at the source of the Penonton River. This river runs across the hamlet of Hutan Samak. Villagers from the village of Titi Akar maintain this shrine. Since there are thick rainforests around both shrines, they can be approached only by boat. The two tutelary spirits of *datok sakti* and *datok kebeneh* are thought to be a pair of tutelary spirits, and they are said to be husband and wife or siblings. On the ritual of *lancang-balai*, shamans leave spirit boats and model castles behind in front of these shrines (see Chapter 6).

In addition, each hamlet has a plain altar (*humah tetau*). This altar is prepared in front of a tree, to which the offering of sacrificial tray is dedicated by a hamlet priest at the time of slashing and burning forest and at the harvest of rice (see Chapter 2). The spirit living in this altar is called “spirit of attention (*hantu tetau*).” This spirit is supposed to inform villagers in advance on the occurrences of mischief caused by malevolent spirits living in the rainforest, because it is believed to have a power to protect the boundary between human hamlet and dangerous rainforest.

## 4-3. Soul and Witchcraft

### Soul

In Akit society, the concept soul is usually referred to as *semangat*, or

occasionally as *roh*. According to Annandale, Malay peasants in south Thailand distinguish three distinctive types of souls, viz. *semangat* as vitality of life, *rôh* which goes out of from a man when he or she sleeps, and *nyâwa* as “breath of life” (1903b: 93-96). R. J. Wilkinson argues that *sěmangat* and *roh* are “often bracketed or regarded as synonymous (1959: 978)”, though he points out loose terminological differences between *sěmangat*, *roh*, *nyawa*, and *nafas*, which mean “soul” or “spirit of life” in common. In analyzing the Malay magic, Endicott discusses three distinctive types of soul, viz. *sěmangat*, *roh*, and *nyawa*. He insists that these three terms could be understood as different aspects of the single human soul as “soul substance”, which is usually referred to as *sěmangat*. Namely, *sěmangat* in its undifferentiated state could mean all the three collectively (Endicott 1970: 48-51). In Akit usage, the concepts of *semangat* and *roh* are almost interchangeable in general, except for that dead people’s spirits or dead people’s souls are always expressed as *roh*.

Some Akit shamans tell me that there are two *semangat* inside a human body, and one of them could go out from the body. Others say that a man has only one *roh*, though. They believe that the departure of *roh* means dying, but a part of *roh* may go out from human body without any fatal consequences. Whichever explanation may be taken, the souls’ loss is recognized as becoming ill. Although the soul may go out from the body without any reasons, the most dangerous moments are the time when people are sleeping and the time when people are frightened. While people are sleeping, their souls are believed to depart from their bodies. Changing direction of sleeping people is forbidden because souls, which could identify the bodies only with their owners’ faces, are believed to be unable to go back to their original bodies. When people are frightened, the souls may also easily go out from their bodies. As soon as people frightened, therefore, each has to drink a cup of water in order to prevent his or her soul from going out. If departed souls wander into the forest or at sea and lose the way back to original bodies, their owners are believed to fall into illness. The departed souls may be stolen by malevolent spirits or by dead people’s spirits. Searching or regaining departed souls is the important task for Akit shamans during healing rituals.

## Witchcraft

Witchcraft is called *dengki*. Although “*dengki*” means “jealousy” in the standard Malay and Bahasa Indonesia, this word indicates “witchcraft” in the

Akit context. Sorcery or witchcraft is not carried out in their daily life, but in relation to shamanic cures only. Witchcraft is symbolically connected to some magical objects such as a clod, a piece of cloth with pictographs, or nuts. During healing séances, shamans look for these objects inside patients' bodies, around their houses, or in model houses of spirits, and they try to neutralize these objects with special symbolic actions. Usually the accusation against witches is not materialized, because shamans are not allowed to inform patients or audiences about witches' names. In case shamans declare witches' identities, the witches are always people living in the far distant place outside Akit communities. Sometimes, still, shamans say that witchcraft is the causes of illness. I heard this kind of diagnosis three times during my field research.

Shamans' diagnoses often say that the causers of illness such as malevolent spirits, departed souls, or witchcraft, are multiple. Sometimes, for instance, shamans say, "an evil spirit took the soul", "a patient losing his soul receives some malevolent interference by spirits", "a magical object of a witch invites evil spirits into patient's body", or so on. These combinations are decided by every shaman relatively freely. Although the explanation of illnesses' cause in combination of departed souls, malevolent spirits, and witchcraft is in general in Rupert Island, yet some shamans in the village of Titi Akar do not think that departed souls become a causer of illness. Accordingly, they do not make ecstatic journey to other worlds to look for departed souls.

While many researchers emphasize that patients' souls may be abducted by other people through witchcraft in the Malay magic (Skeat 1900: 568-579; Winstedt 1951 [1925]: 84; Annandale 1903a: 95-97), Akit shamans tell me that it would not occur for patients. Souls are always stolen by malevolent spirits or dead people's souls, not by other living people. Akit witches would like to send magical objects to around their enemies, but they never try to obtain enemies' souls in order to add their magical powers. The Akit does not have the concept to abduct *semangat* from other people.

## 5. Séance and its Procedures

The Akit refers to séances as *bedekkeh*, whereas they are called as *belian*, *main puteri*, *gebiah*, *berjin*, and so forth in the Malay shamanisms. There are two kinds of séances in the Akit shamanism, viz. healing ritual (*bedekkeh beobat*) and purifying and offering ritual (*bedekkeh bebedak*). Healing rituals are held in compliance with villagers' demands. Host family invites a shaman, his assistants, a drummer, and neighbors as helpers to their family's house, at which the séance is held. On the other hand, purifying and offering rituals are arranged periodically twice or three times a year. On this occasion, a shaman calls his assistants, some drummers, as well as many audiences to his own house. Occasionally, some shamans may participate together in the same purifying and offering séances.

In general, every séance starts around seven p.m., and it lasts for from one to two hours. The hall and eaves of host family's house are lighted with electronic or kerosene lamps. Usually many audiences with irrespective of age or sex come to see the séance. At the end of the séance, the host family treats all the attendants to coffee, porridge, and confectionary. The audiences keep talking until the middle of night, even during the shaman's possession. Although many helpers and audiences always attend at each séance, in particular, some hundreds of people may gather to watch the final three evenings of purifying and offering ritual of the New Year, at which we could observe the most prosperous and lively séance.

During a series of séances at two or three consecutive evenings, some prohibitions should be followed by the host family and the shaman. Neither pork nor crab-meat is allowed to be brought into the house. The shaman is forbidden to drink any liquors. Because assistant spirits are allegedly derived from Islamic ones, they are believed not to like those foods. Dogs or cats are also kept away from séances, as assistant spirits are believed to confuse cats or dogs with tigers and they go away from around the shaman (cf. Skeat 1900: 448; Winstedt 1951 [1925]: 57). After finishing a series of séances, the gate of host family's compound is closed with a rope made of pandanus leaves, from the next morning of the séance to the afternoon, lest people should go in or go out there. The compound at that time seems to be the tabooed (*pantang*) area.

## 5-1. Healing Ritual

A series of séances lasts two or three consecutive evenings. At most three series could be organized, but the interval more than one night is usually set among series. The first series is called “disease (*penyakit*)”, the second “addition (*tambahan*)”, and the third “bringing sour dry fruit and salt (*mengantah masam-gakham*).” At the first night of the first series, the shaman diagnoses his patient and makes some medicines. Then, he orders the host family to prepare offerings for the second evening. These events are repeatedly happened even after the second evening in accordance with the patient’s improvement. The third or last series is not only for curing the patient, but also for strengthening the shaman’s healing magic. After this séance, the shaman and his patients eat together salt (*gakham*) and sour dry fruits (*masam*). According to Eliade, this kind of co-eating is observed among magicians and sorcerers including shamans all over the world. Usually they drink salted and spiced water and eat highly aromatic plant to increase their inner magical heat (2004 [1951]: 475).

The main procedures of each séance are mainly divided into the following six stages:

- (1) Making medicine
- (2) Giving magical breath and spells
- (3) Diagnosis
- (4) Offerings
- (5) Driving spiritual away
- (6) Regaining patient’s soul

The shaman makes some medicines as the first procedure of the séance, usually before he falls into a trance. He utters incantation over a water-jar (*buyung*) of well water, and adds parched rice ( *bekheti* ) and beeswax into it. Occasionally, a dose of betel is also inserted into the jar. The patient drinks a glass of water from the jar after the séance. The rest of the water is used for the patient’s bathing water at the next morning. This liquid medicine (*obat*) is believed to be effective for purifying the patient’s body. Sometimes, the shaman makes magical rice paste (*tepong tawah*; see Endicott 1970:136-137; Skeat 1900: 400; Winstedt 1951 [1925]: 110,150), which is lime juice mixed with rice flour. The shaman chants spells over a small bowl containing magical rice paste (see Photograph 5). The patient applies the paste to his or her body. After the séance it is washed out with bathing water.

Giving breath and spells over the patient is another essential part of treatment during healing séances. The shaman repeatedly blows air and casts spells over the patient's body. The breath is thought to give the inner essence and power to the patient, and spells are to strengthen the patient's body against evil spirits. During this action, the shaman gives spells particularly carefully over the top of head, both thumbs, and both big toes of the patient. These terminations of the body are said to be gateways of the patient's soul, which are easily damaged by evil spirits. Some informants say that, as God's breath created the first human being in Akit mythology, shamans give breath (*menapas*) to the patient. Islamic Malays in Trengganu attach particular importance to the relationship between breath, or "inner wind (*angin*)", and human health. The main purpose of their Islamic séance is regulating the inner wind (Laderman 1991: 64-86).

The diagnosis is given after the shaman has fallen into a trance. The main purpose of the diagnosis is deciding kinds or amounts of offerings for the following séances. At first, the shaman stares at the candle light held in his right hand, looking through the open folding fan held in his left hand. He walks around the hall and looks for something. According to local explanation, through assistant spirits' eyes the shaman tries to look for the patient's soul and evil spirits that are causers of the illness. Evil spirits are believed to be seen as a red or a yellow beam on the cloth lining the folding fan. A red beam means evil spirits living on land and a yellow beam means ones at sea. Frequently the shaman also picks his ears with his fingers, nodding his head, by which he hears the familiar spirits' voices. When drumming is stopped, in addition, the familiar spirits could talk with the shaman's human assistants through the shaman's mouth.

Based on the diagnosis at the first night, appropriate offerings are prepared for the next séance. The main offerings are some model houses or boats (see Photographs 7 & 8) and many kinds of foods such as confectionaries, bananas, tobaccos, parched rice, washed colored rice, eggs, betel nuts, and so on. These foods are put on some trays. During séances, the shaman shakes model houses or boats and food trays around the patient (see Photograph 3). After that, young villagers take them out of the house. The offerings are left behind in the forest or set adrift over the sea or over the river. The detailed description concerning the offerings is given in the next chapter.

The shaman always tries to drive evil spirits out of the patient's body. The usual method is sucking out evil object from the patients' bodies, which is called *nyabut*. After sucking evil spirits from the body, the shaman spews them with

his spit into a water basin. The water is thrown away into the sea after the séance. Occasionally, we could find an object such as a clod, a nut, or an insect, in the shaman's mouth. Shamans say that they are the source of malevolent spiritual powers. There is another method how to remove evil spirits existing somewhere outside the patient's body, though it happens quite rarely. In this measure, the shamans try to catch evil spirits directly with his hands. During each healing séance, a shaman tries to confine evil spirits into a model house placed in front of the patient, with performing ecstatic dances. Then, he slams himself onto the model shrine, and catches hold something. The object which the shaman finds is sealed carefully with cloths and thrown away deep into the sea. This technique is used only when evil spirits are regarded to be extremely malevolent. In addition to these two methods, shamans also could fight directly with invisible evil spirits using knives or folding fans. Moszkowski did observe this kind of fighting among the Akit in the basin of the Siak River at the beginning of the twentieth century (1909a: 125).

When the shaman confirms that the illness is caused by the lost of the patient's soul, the soul regaining method is applied. If the shaman succeeds in finding the soul on the plane world of the land or of the sea, he dispatches his assistant spirits to the place. Those spirits would carry the patient's soul back to the shaman's hand. The shaman blows the regained soul into the top of the patient's head, or he inserts it in the pillow that the patient usually uses at night. In case that the shaman does not succeed in finding the departed soul, however, he goes to the lower world and looks for the departed soul. For this journey, the shaman has to enter into a deep trance, like dead state. The shaman lies down beside the patient, being covered a piece of large cloth. He is encircled with many edible offerings for evil spirits living in the lower world. Normally after several minutes, the shaman starts a violent convulsion, stands up rudely, and performs ecstatic dance, catching the patient's soul in his hand. Then, he returns the soul to the patient. This is referred to as *nyelembah*. Usually shamans succeed in regaining the patient's soul, but occasionally they fail in doing so. In such unsuccessful cases, the patients' souls are always caught by dead people's spirits. As dead people's supernatural powers are believed to be exceedingly strong, the shaman is not to return such patients' souls back.

The shamans' ecstatic journeys may be used, not only for looking for departed souls, but also for negotiating other matters with the dead people. According to my observation, a shaman went to the lower world when hamlet tutelary spirits (*hantu tetau*; see Chapter 4) did not guard a patient from evil spirits properly. Although the shaman attempted to give offerings to the

tutulary spirits, they were hard to be pleased and did not receive any offerings. The shaman went to the lower world, using the technique of ecstatic journey. He asked a dead old priest (*pawang ladang*; see Chapter 2) what kinds of offerings could satisfy the tutelary spirits. Then, he dedicated appropriate offerings to the tutelary spirits, and eventually succeeded in calming them down. Although such healing procedures like this seldom occur, this case illustrates that Akit shamans could take a role of mediator between human beings and dead people, as well as between human beings and spirits.

The healing ritual is usually organized by one shaman, his human assistants including one chief assistant (*bebayu*), and at least one drummer (*bidung*). When the shaman thinks that the patient is serious, he calls other shamans to ask their helps. Unlike the cases of Kelantan or Trengganu among Malays (Cuisinier 1936; Laderman 1991; Firth 1967), the patient, shaman's assistants, and audiences do not fall into a trance or perform dances during séances in Rupert Island. It is only shamans that fall into a trance.

While the shaman tries to drive evil spirits out of the patient's body or to regain the patient's soul, the séance reaches a climax phase. The drummer plays in quick rhythm, the shaman stamps his feet loudly on the hall floor, and the shaman's assistants keep their eyes upon his actions carefully in order to support his next procedure. In this climax phase, the shaman always performs stunts using fire. The shaman holds several fired candle wicks between his teeth at a draft, and sometimes he runs around over bonfires prepared in front of the patient's house. In olden times, shamans could manage to swallow burnt charcoals. The similar performances of controlling fire and hearth by shamans are reported from all over the world (Eliade 2004 [1951]; Lepp 2004). This tensioned atmosphere gives patients good psychological effect against the illness (see Kramer 1970; Chen 1979). Although some patients occasionally shed tears, scream, or behave violently at this stage, they always calm down after this tension. Lévi-Strauss (1963: 186-206) insists that the purpose of shamans' treatments is bringing repressed material to a conscious level, resulting in an abreaction. While he stresses the efficiency of words by shamans in his argument, Akit shamans seem to utilize such tensioned procedures for the purpose of bringing the patients' abreaction about, instead of words. The words are less important in the Akit healing.



## 5-2. Purifying and Offering Ritual

Each purifying and offering ritual is organized by one shaman at his house. Two purposes of this ritual are known. The first is purifying shaman himself, children, and shaman's former patients of healing rituals. The second is entertaining and calming down his assistant spirits as well as malevolent spirits. This ritual results in preserving or restoring the spiritual well-being inside the hamlet.

In the village of Titi Akar, this regular ritual is held three times per year, i.e. the eleventh, the twelfth, and the first months of the Chinese lunar calendar. In the village of Hutan Panjang, it is held twice a year, viz. the first and the seventh months. One ritual of séance lasts three consecutive evenings. At that time, a temporary stage is occasionally built in front of the shaman's house for the convenience of audiences. Plural shamans often join together. Several drums and one Malay typed gong are prepared. If shamans' apprentices would like to be real shamans, the initiation ritual is also conducted at the same time during this ritual.

According to shamans, the purifying part of this ritual is the most important and essential. In each séance before falling into a trance, a shaman makes magical cleanser or cosmetic (*bedak*) from lime fruit and rice flour that is dyed with several colors. He chips the rind of a lime off carefully four or six times with a knife, casting spells. Then, he checks whether the pieces of the rind falling on the floor appear its surface or its inside. If the numbers of the pieces showing its outside and its inside are the same, the lime is adequate for making magical cleanser. If not, the shaman tries it again with another lime fruit. The juice of the proper lime is mixed with rice flour (*tepong*) dyed with several kinds of flower petals or with dyestuffs in a small bowl. After shaman casts spells for a several minutes over the bowl, the magical cleanser is finished to be made. The shaman applies this cleanser on his whole body. Former patients and children apply it on their foreheads. The purifying ritual is completed when they wash the cleanser off with bathing water after the séance. It is an obligation for the shaman to maintain his magical cleanness in order to enjoy his assistant spirits' favors. At all séances, shaman makes this cleanser repeatedly. In addition, a spikelet of palm-blossom (*mayang*) is another necessity for this ritual. The shaman falling into a trance beats himself with this spikelet, and sprinkles the young seeds of the spikelet to the audiences. The seeds are thought to have a cleansing power.

For entertaining spirits, many kinds of foods and toys are prepared. The

foods are in common with that of healing séances, such as confectioneries, tobaccos, eggs, parched rice, betel nuts, and so on. They are put on several large trays. In contrast with healing rituals, however, yellow-colored glutinous rice is frequently cooked for purifying and offering rituals (see Photograph 13). The small box (*kotak*) which contains usually seven kinds of things, viz. tobaccos, betel nuts, pan, lime, candles, incenses, and scented oil, is also prepared as one of the main offerings. But a part of the box's contents varies from shaman to shaman.

The shaman lifts one tray of foods or one small box up in front of audiences. He whirls these offerings round over the head of the audiences at seven times for the purpose of blessing the people (see Photograph 4). After this action, the shaman is sometimes convulsed. Shamans say that at that time they go to the sky world together with the offerings in order to dedicate them to spirits. In the village of Hutan Panjang, shamans drink normal coconuts milk at the end of all séances. Coconut milk is said to arrack for spirits. After all procedures are finished, the foods are served to audiences.

While various kinds of toys for spirits are available, important ones are decorated jars and buckets (*gunma taman*), spirit boats, and model castles. In each séance, a set of some jars and some buckets is prepared, which are decorated with a kind of necklaces plaited of coconut leaves (*jakhi lipan*). Bouquets of artificial flowers are also arranged in buckets (see Photograph 6). While Skeat refers the similar "flower garden (*taman bunga*)" used during healing rituals in the Malay Peninsula (1900: 413, 438), Akit shamans use these jars and buckets only during purifying and offering rituals. Shamans sprinkle the parched rice over the jars and buckets during séances. In the end, shamans bathe with water from the jars and the buckets in order to wake properly from their trance. In addition, shamans watch and play with the ornaments of spirit boats and model castles for the purpose of entertaining spirits. A spirit boat and a large model castle, which are mentioned in the next chapter in detail, are usually used at séances of the New Year of the Chinese lunar calendar. For the eleventh and twelfth months' rituals, in the village of Titi Akar, some small castles are prepared. In the village of Hutan Panjang, on the other hand, only food offerings are dedicated at the seventh month's ritual. The purifying and offering ritual at the first month, which is the most prosperous, is called *lancang-balai*, in particular. During the first month's séances, occasionally shamans play Malay combat dances (*silat*), present fake cockfights (*sabong ayam*) in which two toy cocks made of leaves are fighting, or perform some ritual dances. The last is the dance similar to one in the case of incision

ceremony for the purpose of entertaining spirits. Audiences always cheer their behaviors and dances. This scene looks like a usual festival. The purifying and offering ritual finishes at shamans' bathing to wash the magical cleanser and their spirit possessions off.

The magical rice paste (*tepong tawah*) is used during healing rituals, whereas the magical cleanser or cosmetic (*bedak*) is used during purifying and offering rituals. Both are the similar sort of traditional medicines. Still, the magical cleanser is prepared for purifying and offering rituals by shamans, using colors and shamans' special spells. On the other hand, the magical rice paste could be prepared by skillful villagers, not necessarily by shamans, on occasion of funeral ceremonies, feasts for newborns, and healing séances. According to Akit villagers, the latter has stronger magical power than the former.

Malays also use magical rice paste in order to purify a new born babies, dead bodies, or sick patients during ceremonies as well as during magical activities (Endicott 1970:136-137; Skeat 1900: 400; Winstedt 1951 [1925]: 110,150). The fruit lime, which is always added to the magical rice paste, is also believed to be a sacred one to purify spiritual pollutions among Malays (Skeat 1900: 278; Winstedt 1951[1925]: 104). Endicott suggests that the magical effect of the magical rice paste is the weakening of boundaries of physical bodies to admit passage of essence (1970: 136-137). This interpretation also seems to be applied not only to the magical rice paste but also to the magical cleanser among the Akit.

As for an old record of purifying and offering rituals, Kähler describes some procedures of séances in the hamlet of Hutan Rayu, the village of Titi Akar, through participant observation before World War II. Although he regards the séances as healing rituals or as exorcism (*Krankenbeschwörung*), they must have been the purifying and offering rituals, as giving the shaman used a large model castle, a swing, beads, and so on, without making any treatments to patients (Kähler 1960: 18-20). The detail is almost in common with my observation of purifying and offering rituals.

### **5-3. Spirit Possession and Drum Rhythms**

Each Akit séance is started and progressed by at least one drummer (*bidung*) who makes regular drum rhythms. The drum is not only a musical

instrument to produce staging effects, but also a lead runner of spirits as a “speaker” to summon them. The drum rhythms (*lagu*) are inherited from mater shamans to his pupils, together with assistant spirits. Sometimes, however, spirits teach some rhythms to shamans through the dream. The names of drum rhythms are in accordance with assistant spirits’ names. For example, *hantu bujang* is an assistant spirit, but *lagu bujang* is a drum rhythm. While there are numerous variations of the rhythms, each shaman has usually from ten to thirty kinds of rhythms.

A cylindrical frame drum (*bebana*) with about forty centimeters in diameter is used during shamanic séances. Its frame is made of coconut palm, and it is covered with black ape’s leather (*betut*). Only drums made of this ape’s leather are said to succeed in summoning spirits during séances. However, the drum itself is not recognized as a sacred or magical device. Siberian shamans always think their drums as an idol or a symbolical shamans’ vehicle, though (Eliade 2004 [1951]: 168-176).

Every shaman falls into a trance during a series of three to five rhythms. At the beginning of each séance, he uses a folding fan over an incense bowl sitting cross-legged on a special mat, and utters magical spells quietly (see Photograph 2). After the first drum rhythm begins, he starts suffering from a convulsion. After a while, the shaman’s main assistant holds the incense bowl over the shaman’s head counting three times from one to seven, and then the shaman’s convulsion calms down. Again after a while, the next rhythm begins. These processes are repeated several times, and in due course the shaman could reach complete spirit possession. During these procedures, the shaman looks for spirits which could help him at first. Spirits are supposed to enter the shaman’s body from his toe and then to crawl up to his head gradually. After this introductory procedure, there is a break for a few minutes, without any drum rhythms. At that time, a shaman’s main human assistant informs spirits inside the shaman of the purpose of this séance. After the drum rhythm begins again, the shaman first stands up from his mat and starts his actions.

Table 2 shows some specimens of rhythms played in the séances by a reputed shaman named Amoi, who is also the traditional village headman in the village of Hutan Panjang. He is recognized as one of the most legitimacy shamans in this village. In my opinion, this list of rhythms seems to include the typical rhythms used by the Akit shamans. The first sequent rhythms mean ones played in regular sequence. The second independent rhythms are requested one by one by the shaman after the first sequent rhythms. The names in parentheses represent the aliases. The hyphens in the column of translation

tell us that the meanings are unknown or that the names are recognized as spirits' personal nouns.

At every séance, the famous shaman Amoi begins to fall into a trance between the rhythms of (1) *Bebana Naik* and (5) *Tuan*. After the rhythm of *Tuan*, the drummer stops playing for a few minutes. During these introductive rhythms, he falls into spirit possession completely. During each healing séance, at this stage, he normally starts to give proper treatments to his patients. Usually, his treatments are continued from the rhythm of (6) *Anak Khaja* to that of (10) *Hulubalang*. After those rhythms, he requests to the drummer to play some independent rhythms, such as *Bujang* or *Pamlima Galang*, to keep doing additional treatments. Finally, he recovers his consciousness at the independent rhythm of *Belayah*. During each purifying and offering séance, on the other hand, it is necessary to play all sequent rhythms from (1) *Bebana Naik* to (22) *Siman* in order plus all independent rhythms. Each rhythm is synchronized with certain actions. For example, he has to play the Malay combat dance (*silat*) with (10) *Hulubalang*, ceremonial dances of incision between (11) *Jandah Gendong* and (15) *Dodoh*, and so on.

Every shaman has his own list of rhythms, like Amoi's list. In the village of Titi Akar, however, shamans request to drummers to play each rhythm one by one after introductive several rhythms during each healing séance.

Using music during séances is generally observed among the foragers of Sumatra, Orang Asli groups, and Malays. The Kubu shamanic songs (*saleh*) seem to have the similar character with the Akit rhythms. According to Dongen and Loeb, Kubu séances are performed by dozens of the songs and drums. Sometimes Kubu shamans could choose the repertoires of song. Each song has a special proper name (Dongen 1910: 253-275; Loeb 1935: 286-289). Batek shamans in the Malay Peninsula hold "singing session" falling into a trance, and then they could communicate with super human beings (Endicott 1979: 134). The process of séances in Trengganu (*main petri*) also includes several dozens of songs (*lagu*) played with various musical instruments (Laderman 1991: 121-180). In the Akit shamanism, however, the vocabulary of the songs is less important. Many shamans could only hum during séances. Instead of songs, drum rhythms take the essential role to attract spirits in Rupert Island.

## 6. Paraphernalia and Offerings

During Akit séances, various kinds of paraphernalia and offerings are prepared. They are used for the purpose of entertaining assistant spirits or helpful spirits as well as of driving malevolent spirits away. While they are partly in common with the paraphernalia used by Malay shamans or magicians in the Malay Peninsula, their forms, usages, and symbolisms are often different from Malay ones. In particular, the paraphernalia of spirit houses (*humah hantu*), spirit boats (*lancang*), and castles (*balai*) are highly developed in the Akit shamanism both in terms of their varieties and in qualities. In this chapter, the cultural meanings of these paraphernalia, and the ways how to use them shall be described.

### 6-1. Shamans' Costumes and Utensils

#### Costumes

Akit shamans have special costumes for séances. During séances, each shaman wears simple hand-made clothes and a turban, covering his face with a piece of cloth. He has a folding fan in his right hand and bells in his left hand, sitting down on a colorful mat piled up with some sheets (see Photographs 2 & 5). In front of him, an incense bowl and a bowl containing parched rice are prepared. These small utensils are indispensable for calling spirits.

Every shaman owns several kinds of clothes, turbans, and mats. He changes them a few times during one séance in accordance with assistant spirits that he calls on. While the design varies from area to area or from shamans' group to group, vivid colors such as white, yellow, black, red, green, and rarely blue, are generally preferred. Some clothes are also embroidered with colorful lines. The most basic costume consists of a plain white shirt, white trousers, and a white turban. Most shamans have this set of clothes. It is often worn at the beginning of each séance (see Photograph 2). Although the color white is nothing to do with particular spirits, some colors are clearly connected

to some assistant spirits possessing shamans. When a shaman called up the spirit of *bujang*, in the village of Titi Akar, he changed from a white shirt to a red one and started to use a red mat (see Photographs 3 & 5). In the village of Hutan Panjang, yellow costumes embroidered with colorful lines on the shirt and trousers symbolize the spirit of *bujang*. The color of the spirit of *hulubalang* is believed to be black. In the village of Titi Akar, the black shirt embroidered with red and yellow thin lines radiately crossing from the abdomen to back is used for this spirit. In the village of Hutan Panjang, shamans wear black turbans for the same spirit. Green is the color of *gendong*, a female spirit (see Photograph 4). The Akit believes that embroidery lines on shirts or mats represent the beams of light which shamans could see during trances.

Skeat discusses the sacredness of colors in the Malay magical world. He enumerates seven colors in order of sacredness, viz. white, yellow, blue, red, purple or orange, green, and black (1900: 51). He states that “yellow is the color used by royalty, whereas the more exalted and sacred color, white (with occasional lapses into yellow), has been adopted by Malay medicine-men as the color most likely to conciliate the spirits and demons with whom they have to deal (1900: 51).” Although the rank of colors is not so clear in the Akit shamanism, their white and yellow are typical color of clothes for séances. Among the Akit, the seven colors are also frequently used, carrying something like magical symbolisms. Rice on the tray (*semah*) for offerings is dyed always with seven colors, and model castles are usually painted with seven colors.

## Utensils Controlling Spirits

Incense is burned continuously throughout séances. At the beginning of séances, each shaman holds his paraphernalia, such as his shirt, turban, and candles upon an incense bowl. After he fumigates his whole body as well, he starts preparing to fall into a trance. Then, a human assistant holds this bowl up over the shaman’s head, and counts three times from one to seven. This behavior is thought to help penetrating new assistant spirits into the shaman’s body. This human assistant does in the same procedure repeatedly upon the patient just before the shaman starts giving treatments to the patient. According to Skeat, there is the incense spirit, who Malay magicians have to call up at the beginning of their rituals.

The burning incense is one of the very simplest, and hence commonest,

forms of burnt sacrifice. Some magicians say that it should be accompanied by an invocation addressed to the Spirit of Incense, which should be besought...to “pervade the seven tiers of earth and sky respectively” (1900: 75).

Although I did not succeed in finding this kind of incense spirit in Akit society, the smoke of incense is believed to be able to reach the seven tiers of earth and the seven tiers of sky respectively. The above-mentioned from one to seven counting by a human assistant is said to follow this movement of smoke. Endicott presumes the effect of incense as “its main function seems to be to make contact with essences, usually free spirits, in order to attract their attention to the thing fumigated or the spell recited (1970: 140).”

The folding fans (*kipas*) and candles made of beeswax are also essential utensils for Akit séances. In giving diagnoses during séances, shamans often hold folding fans and candles up in front of their eyes in order to look for evil spirits. According to shamans, they could look at evil spirits as a beam through the cloth of folding fans. The candle’s beeswaxes are always poured in medicine jars during healing séances. The bells are always held in shamans’ hands for the sake of entertaining assistant spirits with their sound. Endicott summarizes the function of such paraphernalia as follows:

The smoke and smell of incense, the light of candles, and the sound of drums and spells have one thing in common: they all have the ability to penetrate across space to whatever the spirits might be, even through some of the boundaries of the physical world (Endicott 1970: 142).

Some shamans have knives and model bows. Although I did not succeed in seeing both in use, shamans say that the knives are on rare occasion used during healing séances for the purpose of fighting with evil spirits. The model bows (see Photograph 15) are used only during the séances of initiation, with which veteran shamans pretend to shoot at the sky. Moszkowski observed that Akit shamans were using knives and bows in order to fight with evil spirits (1908a: 312). However the Akit does not know how to make real bows, as their traditional hunting gear is a blowgun. Still, bows are used during séances all over the world, and Eliade regards it in same light as shamans’ drums (2004 [1951]: 174-175).



## 6-2. Spirit Houses, Spirit Boats, and Castles

Dedicating offerings on particular vessels to spirits is commonly found in southeast Asian magico-religious rituals. In the Akit shamanism, these vessels carrying offerings are taken the shape of model houses, model boats, and model castles. While such models are used also in the rituals of some Malays, most Malays usually use the simple square trays made of woods or pandanus (*ancak*) as ritual vessels (Skeat 1900: 418-424, 433-436; Winstedt 1951: 68; Fraser 1960: 179-180). On the other hand, the Akit vessels of model houses, boats, or castles have quite sophisticated structures and meanings as well as very impressive appearances.

The model vessels could be divided into three categories, viz. spirit houses (*humah hantu*), spirit boats (*lancang*), and castles (*balai*). Spirit houses have the shapes of house, boat, castle and so on, all of which are used for healing rituals. In the village of Titi Akar, in particular, these spirit houses are called as “disposable things (*bebuang*).” On the other hand, a set of one spirit boat and some castles are used for the purifying and offering ritual of the New Year (see Chapter 5). Spirit houses and spirit boats are made of soft timbers from stemless thorny marsh palms that people could easily cut or bend just with small knives. While shamans in the village of Titi Akar make castles from the same material, shamans in the village of Hutan Panjang build them made of hard timbers. The latter is normally kept inside shamans’ houses (see Photograph 11).

### Spirit Houses

The spirit house varies in shape and in size. Some look like traditional Malay houses, some like multi-floor castles, some like mosques, some like boats, some like rafts, and so on. Each spirit house has a personal name after its design or after its meaning. Some have the land character, and some the sea character (see Chapter 4). More than forty kinds exist.

According to my investigation, for instance, the spirit house of *humah akit* consists of a traditional Malay house on a raft, which is 40 centimeters in length, 40 centimeters in width, and 30 centimeters in height (see Photograph 7). This house is one of the most common models of spirit house. This is to be set adrift over the sea or over the river. The spirit house of *balai gin* is a two-storied castle, but its ground floor has no walls, which is 35 centimeters in length, 35

centimeters in width, and 45 centimeters in height. This is to be left behind in the forest. The spirit house *balai besikah* has four terraces at its four corners, which is 40 centimeters in length, 40 centimeters in width, and 50 centimeters in height. This is also to be left behind in the forest. The spirit house of *kotak* is a modern fishing boat equipped with a radar antenna, which is 40 centimeters in length, 25 centimeters in width, and 30 centimeters in height. This boat, on the contrary, is to be set adrift over the sea or over the river. The spirit house of *jong* looks like a small traditional Akit canoe, on which some human figures with oars are fixed. Its size is 30 centimeters in length, 10 centimeters in width, and 15 centimeters in height. The spirit house of *bukhung ungan* is a special hut, on which a large wooden bird is perches. It is 50 centimeters in length, 40 centimeters in width, and 40 centimeters in height (see Photograph 8). This is to be left behind in the forest. The square tray of *ancak* is also often used during Akit séances as during the Malay magical rituals. This tray full of foods could be behind in the forest as well as set adrift over the sea or over the river. The size is 30 centimeters in length, 30 centimeters in width, and 5 centimeters in height. The spirit house of *sengup* is a large box, on which one spirit house of *bukhung ungan* is set. During a healing séance, a patient is covered with this box, and the shaman smashes the part of this spirit house of *bukhung ungan* in order to drive evil spirits confined in it away. This is 100 centimeters in length, 100 centimeters in width, and 170 centimeters in height. The spirit house of *lukah* is a fish trap made of plant twigs with thorns, in which a clay model of crocodile is always enshrined. This is to be sunk deep in the sea or in the river. Its size is 60 centimeters in length, 25 centimeters in diameter. Almost all spirit houses in Rumat Island do not differ in name or in shape, but some shamans use unique ones.

During healing séances, from two to four kinds of model houses and boats are used per patient per evening. At least one spirit house of them is seaborne. Before séances, various foods such as parched or steamed rice, betel nuts, tobaccos, bananas, eggs are enshrined inside the spirit houses. During séances, shaman falling into a trance holds the houses up in front of his patient and shakes them (see Photograph 3). Then, he puts them around the patient. The entrance of these spirit houses (*pintu*), where candles often stand, should be directed toward the patient. The patient's family members stroke the patient, and then give gestures that they throw something toward spirit houses. People say that this action is to move evil spirits or their harmful influences from the patient into spirit houses. As soon as possible after the shaman gives a signal, young male helpers carry the spirit houses out of patient's house to leave them

behind in the forest or to set them adrift over the sea or the river.

Spirit houses are prepared from the second evening of every healing ritual. Shamans decide which kinds of spirit houses as well as offerings are appropriate for the next séance at the first evening, by the aid of information from his assistant spirits. The shamans tell the patient's family members the names of such houses for their preparations. Spirit houses are normally built by male neighbors, as the relationship between the patient's family and neighbors are always reciprocal. In general, shamans in the village of Titi Akar use spirit houses more frequently than shamans in the village of Hutan Panjang.

As for the implication of spirit houses, some shamans say that they are dedicated to evil spirits in order to drive them away. Other shamans, however, say that they are to be dedicated to assistant spirits or guardian spirits. According to my research, first of all, spirit houses seem to function as evil spirits' jails. The relevant function is also observed when the patient's family members try to take something out of the patient's body and to throw it away into spirit houses symbolically. Secondly, spirit houses are offerings for other spirits such as shaman's assistant spirits, tutelary spirits, or even free spirits. The latter implication is also very important nature of spirit houses, because the function is concerned to maintain good relationship not only between patients and spirits, but also between community and spirits. This fact proves that Akit shamans have not only religious roles, but also social and political ones. Villagers say, "what humans are satisfied with is foods and the place of residence. Spirits are the same."

We have several descriptions about spirit houses or castles in the Malay magical practices. In one of the earliest records on the Malay shamanism by Maxwell, there is one description about a model mosque (*balei berpusing*), which is used during the healing séances in the State of Perak. This square building is put a little house on the top which could be turned round at will. The mosque was filled with foods in order to guide an indefinite number of evil spirits into this building, and then it was set adrift over the river (1884: 230-231). Cuisinier gives a description of the use of a spirit house (*balai pancha persana*), i.e. palace, and analyzes its symbolical meaning in the Kelantanese séances (Cuisinier 1936: 104-112). Kessler also makes mention of *balai* used during Kelantanese séances. *Balai* is not only used for healing psychological and psychosomatic illness, but also dedicated in order to benefit communities. The former nature of spirit houses is parallel to Akit spirit ones in healing rituals, and the latter to the castles in the purifying and offering rituals. She also analyzes the symbolic meaning of *balai*, developing from Cuisinier's

argument (Kessler 1977: 300, 316-321).

According to Fung (2004: 831), Semai shamans (*hala*) also use *balai* of hard woods and a little boat made of soft timbers from stemless thorny marsh palms during healing séances. The *balai* is painted black and red. The *balai* is hung from the ceiling with many foods which are offerings to assistant spirits. The little boat is loaded with various foods. After every shaman discharges misfortunes into the boat during séances, it is set adrift over the nearby stream.

Moszkowski shows us the figure of Sakai *balai sēmēngat* with the parts' names (1908 a: 311; 1909 a: 126, see Figure 2). This *balai* is used in the same way as Akit spirit houses. In addition, the ethnic group of the Utan in Bengkalis Island is reported to have similar spirit houses.

## Spirit Boats

One spirit boat is prepared for each purifying and offering ritual once a year. This offering is dedicated only to sea spirits. A boat is around 150 centimeters in length, and it is painted seven colors. The bottom is decorated with beads and woven ropes made of palm leaves (see Photograph 9). Usually, some human figures with rifles in their hands are put on the deck. Each part of the boat has proper noun. For example, the keel is called “dragon decorating itself at sea (*naga behendam di laut*)”, and the stern as “prince of flowerbed (*anak haja beket jambahan*).” According to shamans, spirit boats are the most important for turning assistant spirits into shamans' supernatural assistants.

During purifying and offering rituals, a spirit boat loaded with many foods is dangled on the wall by the left side of shaman's sitting mat. During his spirit possession, he watches the boat and shakes it frequently. In addition to foods, the boat is also loaded with several doll cocks plaited of palm leaves. With these dolls and with his main human assistant, the shaman presents a fake cockfight to audiences. Together with his assistant, he also plays a tug of war using anchor cable made of palm leaves. The shaman plays the cockfight and the tug of war under the rhythm of *bujang jawa* (see Chapter 5). In their folktale, it is said that spirit boats originally come from Java.

This spirit boat's tradition could be found throughout southeast Asia. Skeat (1900) and Cuisinier (1936) report about spirit boats both in Selangor and Kelantan, Malaysia. Eliade summarizes the Indonesian custom of such ritual boats in the context of shamanism, as follows:

- (1) The boat for the expulsion of demons and sickness.
- (2) The boat in which the Indonesian shaman “travels through the air” in search of patient’s soul.
- (3) The “boat of the spirits,” which carries the souls of the dead to the beyond (2004[1951]: 356).

Indeed, boat-shaped spirit houses, such as *jong* and *kotak*, seem to take the first role. First of all, however, Akit spirit boats are used as offerings dedicated to assistant spirits and tutelary spirits. Secondly, their spirit boats are believed to be assistant spirit’s vehicles, which could go and come between land and sea or could move beyond the boundary of the multiple worlds. These functions seem to be close to the Eliade’s second view. As Akit shamans never participate in funeral rites, the third view is not applied at all to Akit spirit boats.

## Castles

The castles are dedicated for land spirits, as opposite to spirit boats for sea spirits during purifying and offering rituals. But, the styles of castles vary from the village of Titi Akar to the village of Hutan Panjang.

In the village of Titi Akar, castles are made of soft timbers from stemless thorny marsh palms. These castles are left behind in the forest after purifying and offering rituals. Although their design varies, each should have seven, nine, or eleven stories, and a large castle is from 150 to 200 centimeters in height. They are painted seven colors. During each purifying and offering séance, one large castle is placed in front of the shaman’s sitting mat. The possessed shaman watches carefully and touches them. In some cases, a large castle is dangled from ceiling with strong ropes in front of the shaman’s sitting mat (see Photograph 10). It is at the height of around two meters above the floor. During his spirit possession, he props up the bottom of the castle by his arms, and plays swing and rotation.

Usually, on the other hand, shamans in the village of Hutan Panjang keep permanent large castles made of hard woods in their own houses (see Photograph 11). In general, their castles are multi-storied buildings. Each has a rotatable part at its top, and in the front one hole like entrance through which a shaman could enter into it. The permanent castles are mainly used for purifying and offering rituals for the purpose of keeping assistant spirits inside. In addition to castles, shamans in the village of Hutan Panjang always keep bird

figures at their houses as well (see Photograph 14). Shamans say that spirits living inside these figures could tell shamans what happened at their houses while they were out.

Besides a set of one spirit boat and one large castle, one small shrine (*balai mamang*) is always prepared for each offering and purifying ritual of the New Year (see Photograph 12) in the both villages. This shrine is always made of soft timbers from stemless thorny marsh palms in the same way with spirit houses. When the spirit boat is set adrift after the ritual, this small shrine is to be hung from a mangrove branch pushing out over the river. Although no Akit informant gives me any detailed explanations concerning this small shrine, Skeat says that the Malay term *mambang* is used indiscriminately together with the term *dewa*, both of the greater and lesser divinities. In particular, this term is related to the sea or the riverbank (1900: 88). Endicott mentions that a kind of *mambang*, *Mambang Tali Harus*, is thought to be one of the classes of beings intermediate between sea and land, which could specifically be associated with the tidal currents or tiderips, alternately penetrating into the land via rivers and going out again to the sea (1970: 104). In the Akit shamanism, the term *Mambang Tali Harus* is used for indicating a kind of a spirit house (*mamang tali akhus*) which is set adrift over the sea or over the river after during healing séances.

On the following day to the purifying and offering ritual lasting three consecutive evenings, spirit boats and small shrines are took to special places. In the village of Titi Akar, spirit boats, castles, and small shrines are brought to the sacred shrine in Penonton (see Chapter 4). A shaman and many villagers with one spirit boat, one castle, and one small shrine go upstream of the Penonton River by fishing boat. On one fishing boat, the shaman falls into a trance, and performs ecstatic dances. At their destination, the spirit boat is set adrift over the river in front of the sacred shrine. The castle is taken deep into the rainforest and left behind there. The small shrine is hung from a mangrove branch. The shaman throws spells on the parched rice, and then he sprinkles it over the river. After that, villagers dive into the river, and swim. Swimming in rivers or in channels is prohibited among the Akit because free spirits living there become angry. This is an exceptional case, however, as free spirits are calmed down by offerings. In the village of Hutan Panjang, spirit boats and small shrines are taken to the sacred shrine of Sungai Raya (see Chapter 4). Although leaving spirit boats, castles, and small shrines in front of these sacred shrines are legitimate, more and more shamans leave them near shamans' hamlets these days.

Skeat describes one ritual among Malay fishermen in which three trays of offerings were used in the similar way as Akit ones. The first is taken into the forest, hung from a mangrove branch, and dedicated to land spirits. The second is hung from a wooden tripod which is erected for this purpose in particular at the middle of a shoal about half-way between stakes for fishing net and fishermen's huts. The third tray is hung from a pole at end of the stakes pushing out toward the sea (Skeat 1900: 312-314). These three trays are similar to Akit castles, small shrines, and spirit boats in terms of their settling places. All of these examples reflect traditional cosmological divisions, for instance, between land and sea.

Castles seem to have some connections with symbolic rotations. The permanent castles at shamans' houses in the village of Hutan Panjang are often equipped with rotatable part at their tops (see Photograph 11; Maxwell 1983). Some non-permanent castles also have such parts, or some swing full circle as they are hung from the ceiling (see Photograph 10). Some shamans rotate small shrines violently during séances. Eliade points out that the motif of whirlwind and swinging is a typical motif of shamanic initiations (2004 [1951]: 424). As for the bird symbolism, it is observed around permanent castles as well as spirit houses (see Photograph 8 and 14, cf. Moszkowski 1908a: 311). According to Skeat, human souls may be conceived as bird in the Malay cosmology (1900: 76). Among the Akit, however, the bird motif would be more related to its shamanistic essence, i.e. shamans' flights to other worlds. Some Akit shamans keep model airplanes, instead of bird figures, together with some permanent castles. Generally speaking, bird symbolism is always related to shamanic ability of ecstatic magical flight (Eliade 2004[1951: 156-158]).

## 7. Conclusions

The Akit shamanism has many identical traits with the Malay magic arts, mainly with regard to the terminologies, the paraphernalia, and the procedures of séance. Contrariwise, the Akit cosmology and some methods for dedicating offerings or patients' treatments are more similar directly to that of Orang Asli, as well as that of ethnic groups living in Siberia and inner Asia. The former could be explained from the fact that the Akit language is a kind of local dialect of the Malay language. The latter may be from the supposition that the ethnic groups of Orang Asli in the Malay Peninsula is rather close to the Akit in terms of culture or cosmology. As for shamanism, however, the Akit one seems to be a variation of the orang Asli one, because both are narrowly conceived shamanisms, which feature both mastery of spirit and ecstatic journey to other worlds. The Akit shamanism could be in between the Malay magic and the Orang Asli shamanism.

The Akit keeps maintaining such narrowly conceived quality of shamanism, because until recently they were at the margins of state control and of adherence to the world religions.

In these days, Akit society is being assimilated more and more to the modern Indonesian reality and the world religious community. Under this circumstance, the Akit shamanism is changing in terms of connotation and nature. It seems to be certain that their traditional medical treatments and religious practices including spirit possession will not disappear, because such practices are still ubiquitous even in modern Malay world as well as all over the world including in developed countries.

For example, however, there is every indication that the social positions around Akit shamans are turning into more intricate or complicated ones. In the village of Hutan Panjang, the traditional headman (*batin*) by customary law is a reputed shaman. He often dedicates offerings to spirits through his séances for the purpose of benefiting the village and its people. His authority is based upon both secular and supernatural powers. In this village, in other words, shamans control legal and political matters as well as ceremonial activities. Almost all processes and procedures are relatively well organized, therefore, because of the power unification. In the village of Titi Akar, on the other hand, a former traditional headman is not a shaman. He is now the bureaucratic village



headman appointed by the local government. He, as an administrative officer of the Republic of Indonesia, encourages villagers to take modern medicines, although he understands well how important their shamanism is. He also strongly persuades villagers to be Buddhists. In this village, shamans' authority is gradually being separated from political, legal, or religious authority. There is no shaman around the headman's house. The most reputed shamans there is a mixed-blooded Chinese living in the hamlet of Hutan Samak, which is situated on the opposite of the Morong Channel from the central part of the village of Titi Akar. This proves that shamanism in this village has already been driven away to the marginal or personal position.

In the future, in addition, there is a possibility that the Akit shamanism might lose the narrowly conceived essences of shamanism. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, the world religion or the state organization are usually incompatible with the classic essences, and it will be succeed in eliminating such essences. According to my research, indeed, shamans in the village of Hutan Panjang emphasize more firmly their roles of carrying offerings to spirits living in upper world in order to benefit the village and its people. Some shamans in the village of Titi Akar, however, use no method of ecstatic journey to other worlds at all. Both villagers and shamans living in the village of Titi Akar seem to start thinking that the relationship between village and government would be more important and indispensable than that between villagers and supernatural spirits in order to enjoy the benefits. The further long-term research will be required for the purpose of tracing such changes around the Akit shamanism.

## Tables

Paraphernalia	Akit Language	Secret Word
water	<i>aih</i>	<i>jam</i>
incense	<i>kemenyang</i>	<i>ketepak</i>
folding fan	<i>kipas</i>	<i>sayu bekhayang angin</i>
model houses at healing ritual	<i>humah hantu</i>	<i>sylih</i>
model castle at purifying & offering ritual	<i>balai</i>	<i>mesjid</i>
spirit boat	<i>lancang</i>	<i>kakap</i>
parched rice	<i>beheti</i>	<i>bunga bunguman</i>
mat	<i>tikah</i>	<i>lapit alam</i>
house	<i>humah</i>	<i>sentana</i>

Table 1. Specimen of Shamans' Secret Words

### Sequent Rhythms

	Names of Rhythms	Translation	Place
1.	<i>Bebana Naik</i>	Drum of Start	Land
2.	<i>Sepak Panjang</i>	Long Whack	Land
3.	<i>Nenek</i>	Grandparents or Ancestors	Land
4.	<i>Anak Lang</i>	Child of Raptor	Land & Sea
5.	<i>Tuan</i>	Master; Load	Sea
a break			
6.	<i>Anak Khaja</i>	Child of Royalty	Land
7.	<i>Datok</i>	Doyen or Guardian Spirit	Land
8.	<i>Datok Sutan (Gunang)</i>	Doyen <i>Sutan</i> (Drum)	Land
9.	<i>Gunang Pukhang</i>	Battle Drum	Land
10.	<i>Hulubalang</i>	Commander	Land
11.	<i>Jandah Gendong</i>	-	Land
12.	<i>Maleng</i>	-	Land
13.	<i>Makyong</i>	-	Land
14.	<i>Gendong</i>	-	Land
15.	<i>Dodoh</i>	-	Land
16.	<i>Kitang</i>	-	Land
17.	<i>Datok Khimba Khaya (Danau)</i>	Doyen of Great Forest (Lake)	Land
a break			
18.	<i>Kelaut</i>	To the Sea	Sea
19.	<i>Tuan</i>	Master; Load	Sea
20.	<i>Camakh</i>	Seagull; Tern	Sea
21.	<i>Bujang Jawa</i>	<i>Bujang</i> of Java	Sea
22.	<i>Siman</i>	Sea-mew; Sea -bird	Sea

### Independent Rhythms

Names of Rhythms	Translation	Place
<i>Bujang</i>	Single, Solitary, or Bachelor	Land & Sea
<i>Belayakh</i>	Sailing or Departure	Sea
<i>Ketobong (Komantan)</i>	(see Chapter 4)	Land
<i>Bawah Bumi</i>	Underground	Land
<i>Pamlima Galang</i>	Commander <i>Galang</i>	Land

Table 2. Specimen of Drum Rhythms

## Figures

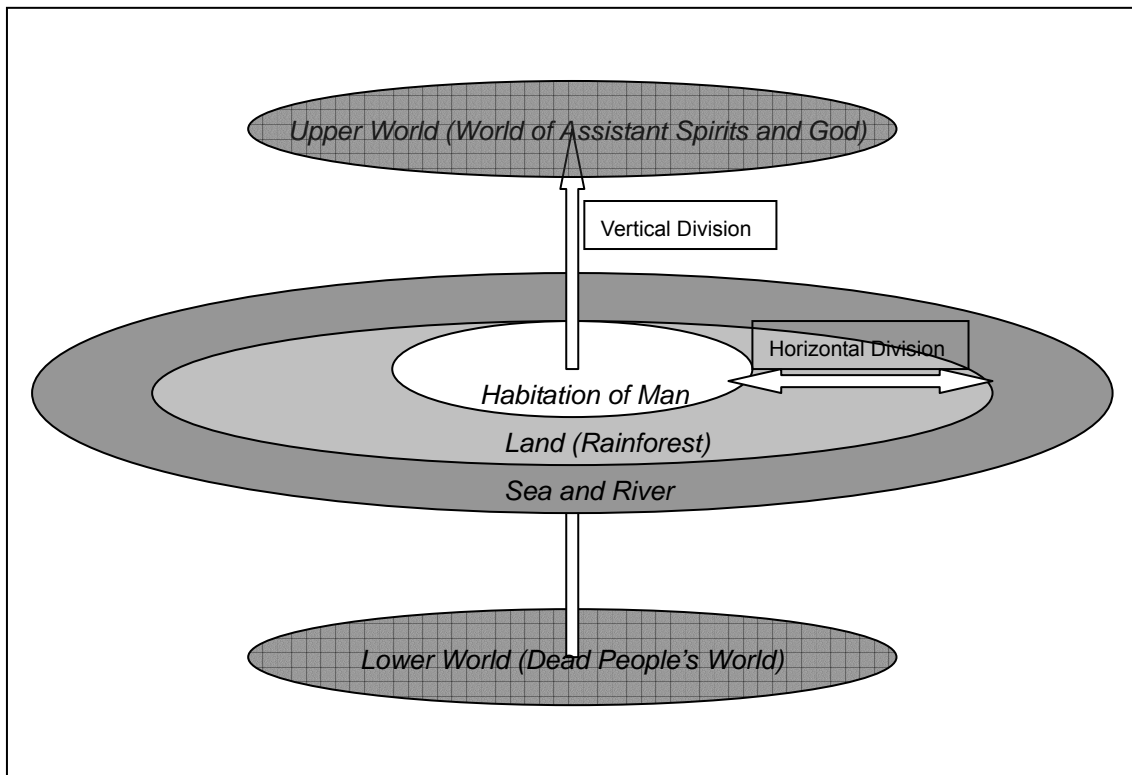


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Akit Cosmos

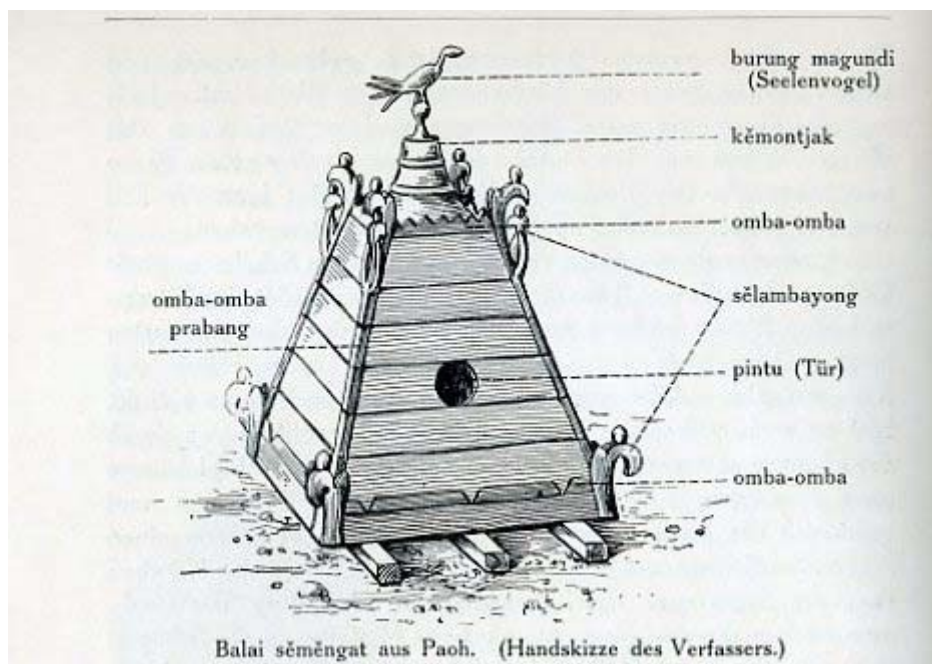
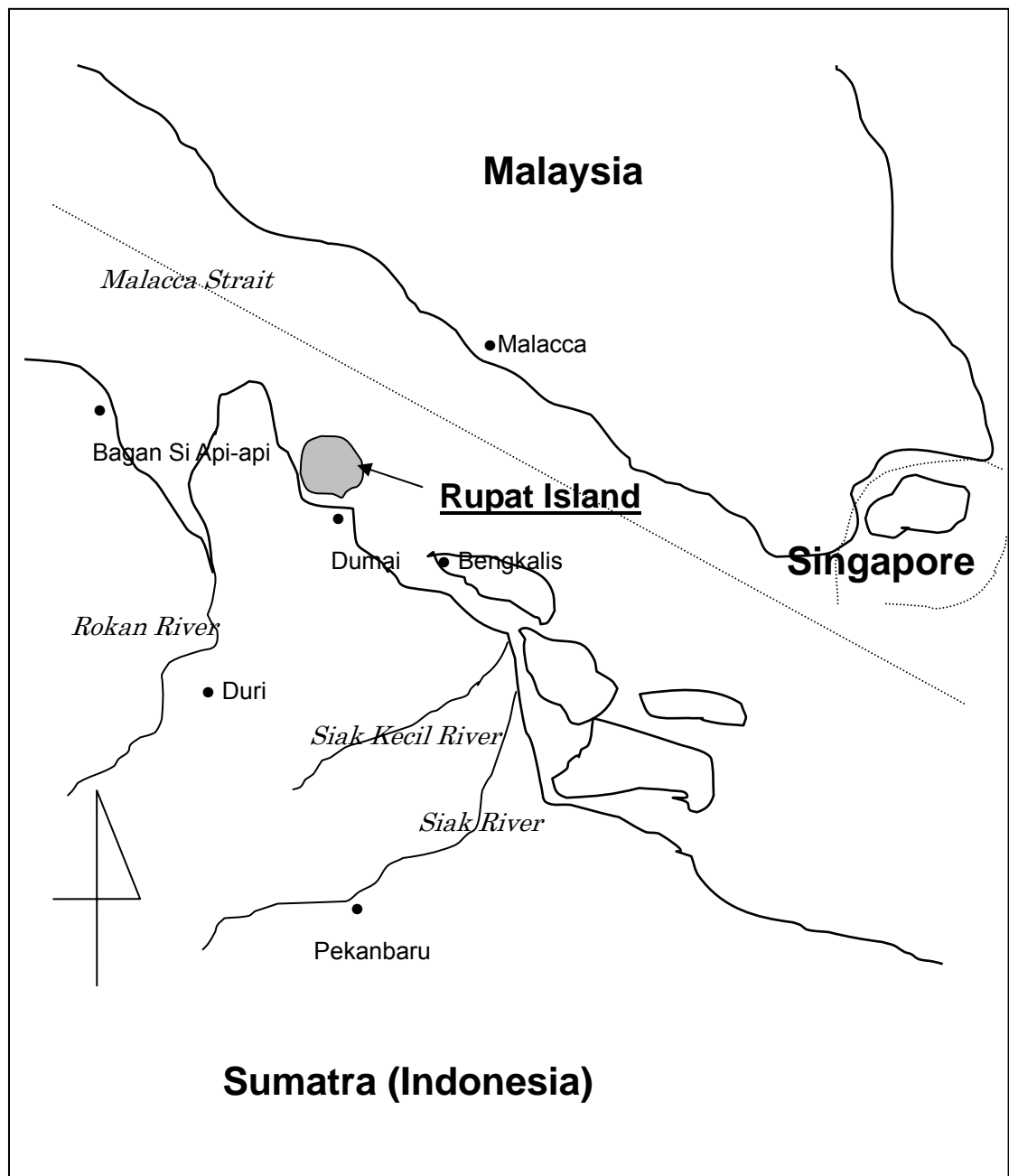
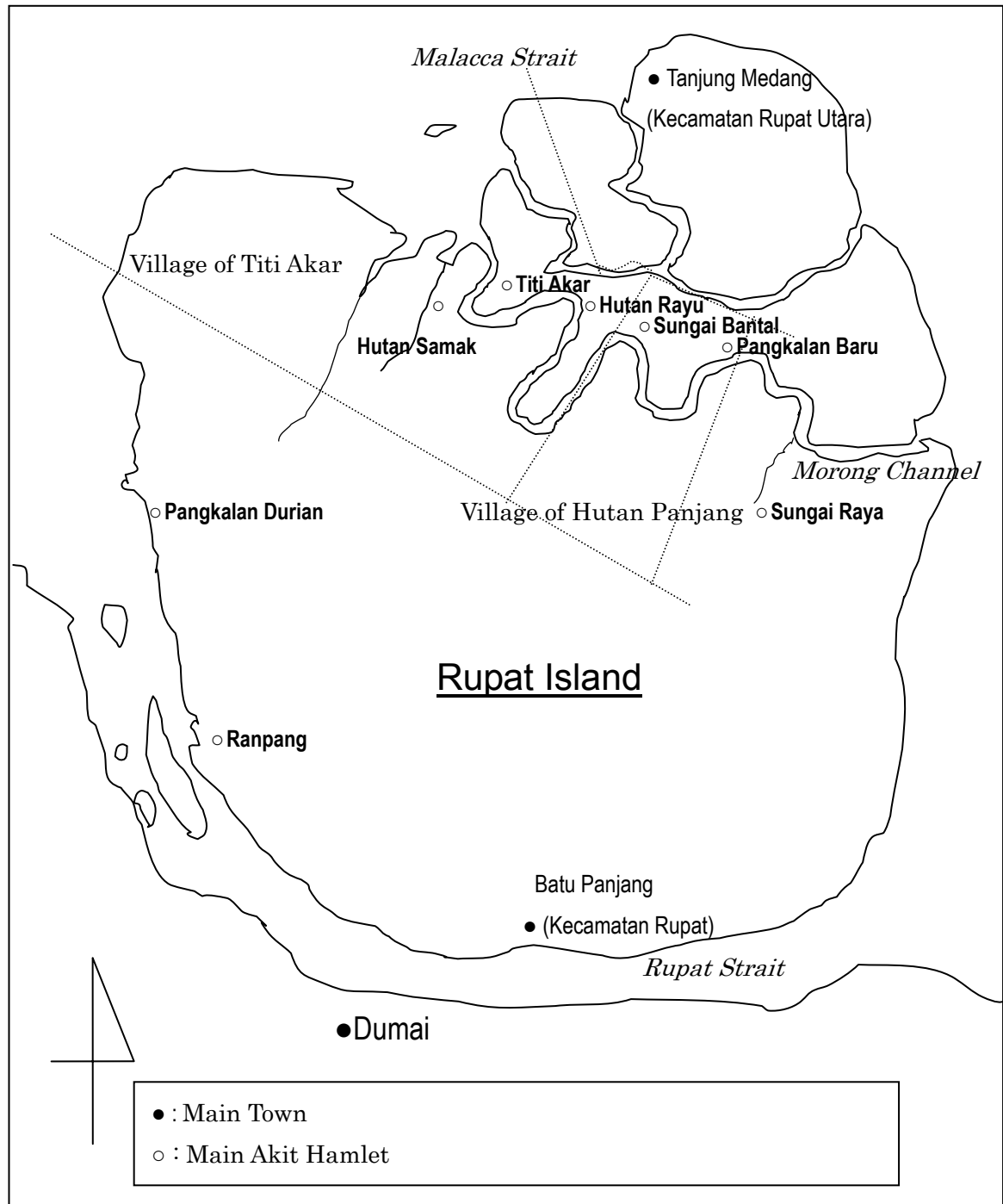


Figure 2. *Balai Sēmēngat* of the Sakai (Moszkowski 1909a: 126)

## Maps

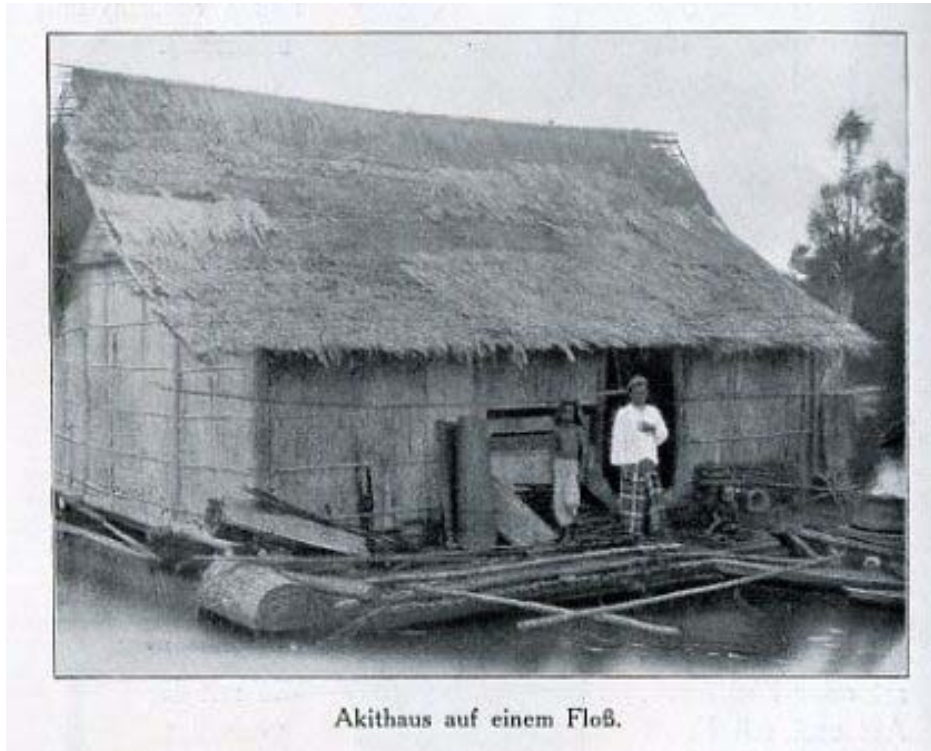


Map 1. Rupat Island in Riau Province



**Map 2. Hamlets of Rupat Island**

## Photographs



Photograph 1. A house on raft (*humah akit*) on the Siak River at the beginning of the twentieth century (Moszkowski 1909a :36).



Photograph 2. A shaman falls into a trance with convulsions at a purifying and offering séance in the village of Titi Akar. Children apply magical cleanser or cosmetic (*bedak*) at their foreheads.





Photograph 3.

A shaman shakes model houses during a healing séance in the village of Titi Akar.



Photograph 4.

A shaman in trance carries a tray of offerings around children and his patients during a purifying and offering séance in the village of Titi Akar.





Photograph 5.

A shaman makes an incarnation on magical rice flour before a healing séance in the village of Titi Akar. The jar in front of him contains the medicine for patients.



Photograph 6. These buckets (a part of *gumma taman*) are toys for spirits during purifying and offering séances. An artificial ornament is in the left bucket.

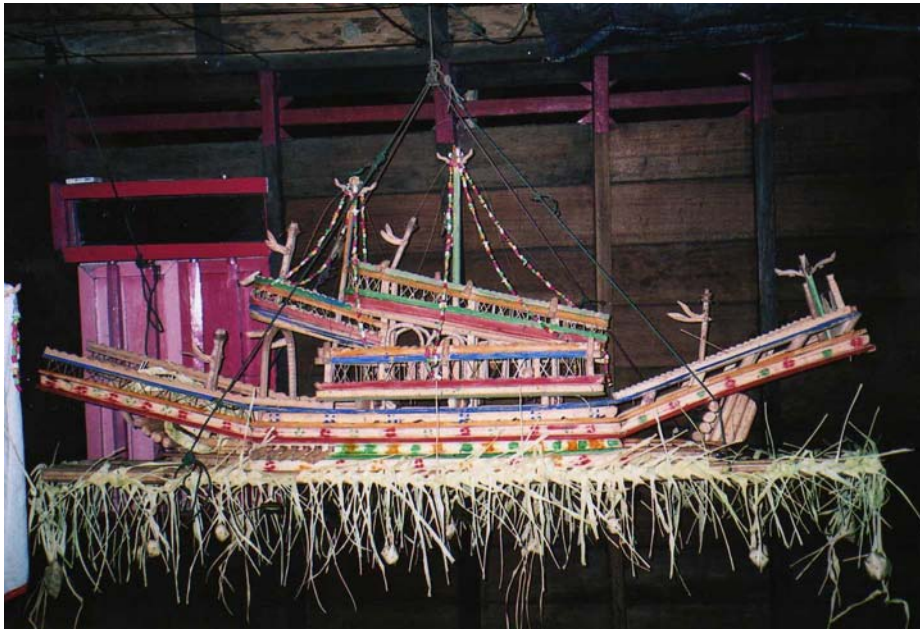


Photograph 7. A model house for healing séances. This model is the similar to the traditional Akit house (see. Photograph 1).



Photograph 8. Model houses dangled at the frontage of a house for healing séances. The names of shrines are *balai jahman*, *balai sesak*, *bukhung ungan*, *balai ketikam*, and *balai gin syusang* from left to right. The third has the bird figure on it.





Photograph 9. A spirit boat (*Lancang*) in the village of Hutan Pangjang, which is 150 centimeters in length, 40 centimeters in width, and 60 centimeters in height.



Photograph 10.  
A disposal type of large castle, *balai tuan putri bintang beheleh*, for the ritual of *lancang- balai* in the village of Titi Akar. During the séance, this is lift up much higher. This model castle has seven stories.



Photograph 11.

A model castle kept at a shaman's house, , which is 150 centimeters in length, 120 centimeters in width, and 250 centimeters in height, in the village of Hutan Panjang. A part of the top could be rotated by the shaman. This castle has eleven stories.

Photograph 12.

A small shrine (*balai mamang*), which is 40 centimeters in length, 40 centimeters in width, and 50 centimeters in height. This model is always prepared together with spirit boats and castles. This is hung from a mangrove branch at the riverbank after the séance of *lancang- balai*.





Photograph 13.  
Offering foods for a purifying and  
offering ritual in the village of Titi  
Akar.



Photograph 14. Model birds kept at a shaman's house in the village of Hutan Panjang.



Photograph 15. A model bow (*panah*) used for initiation ceremonies in the village of Hutan Panjang (cf. Moszkowski 1908a: 312).

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